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ABSTRACT

All eight poetry projects described in this volume, made possible by a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant through the Connecticut Commission for the Arts, were innovative programs designed either to promote changes in teacher training methods or to provide secondary schools with direct experiences with poets through readings and classroom workshops. Five projects dealt specifically with student teachers. Of these five, three included poets and student teachers working with pupils in cooperating schools; the other two were conducted exclusively on college campuses with student teachers who had completed their practice teaching. The sixth project was a Visiting Artists program and did not involve student teachers, but focused on pupils and teachers working with a poet. The Northwest Project brought poets to secondary schools in this area of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Poetry Circuit enabled poets to read their work at several colleges and provided a forum for student-poet readings. (Author/KS)

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POETS IN THE SCHOOLS

Connecticut Commission on the Arts
Poetry Programs

Project Director: Richard Place

Narrative: Kathleen Meagher

Evaluation: Morris L. Cogan

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"Poets in the Schools" documents and evaluates the Arts Commission's poetry programs for 1972-73. The evaluation instruments were developed by Morris L. Cogan and the data collected by Diane Shugert, Roger Zieger, and Elizabeth Hahn of Central and Southern Connecticut State Colleges. The chapters were written and edited by Kathleen Meagher from materials collected from the participants in each program. The Project Director, Richard Place, acted as the Arts Commission's consultant in organizing the programs, collecting materials, and supervising the publication. He also took most of the photographs for the publication.

The publication has been made possible through grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Literature Division, and the Arts and Humanities Program of the U. S. Office of Education. We wish to express our gratitude to the Connecticut Commission for Higher Education, which has offered advice and provided technical assistance, to Nathan Garland for his design ideas borrowed from "Artists in the Classroom" (Connecticut Commission on the Arts, 1973) and to the many wonderful people who wrote the poetry, kept the journals, and submitted the reports which make up this publication.

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Connecticut Commission on the Arts
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A Collective Poem

With wheels in the walls of trying
I take one path and then another
And all of them seemed to thoroughly
enjoy
Something has broken free of itself
Go outside in the snow and roll, roll
Terribly expensive in both money
and time
Serve balloons for dinner every
night for a week
Where in between loving they
whisper
The dream of living
Down the cheek of your sunlight
Professional certification or
extinction would not be at issue
Be like the pain of the earth
No Yes (if yes, what appeals to
you--?)
I sense his dash toward the blind side
Vis a vis the following: hoped for
outcomes:
The answer lies in the words
The limited time available for
interviewing and hiring
I knew I couldn't stay unwanted
Stroking his moustache, gently
kissing
I hope you can convince Senator
Lenge and the Appropriations
Committee
Join hands in a dance, a personal
dance, a poetry
Lord knows what he told his mother
It has been made clear to the
applicants
I haven't found a way to mold
the report into a whole
I feel so cold yet warm yet dreamy I
That, you knew. I wish to say
Stop by my house with the sky
It's a strange time in the year
The seed grows into an orange
It's pretty hard sometimes to
stay out of the way
We wandered around the room and
helped them
Countless milkshakes later our
eyes meet
So delicious looking, I had an
urge to eat it
Bruised by releasing my feet
This is a rough breakdown but
will hopefully act
We made a lot of noise moving
desks and going to the window
Doors--MEN, FACULTY MEN, WOMEN,
FACULTY WOMEN
We had learned to take off our
clothes

Cover design and Collective Poem
made of lines by the people in the
poetry programs and arranged
by Kathleen Meagher

The Connecticut Commission on the Arts was created to "encourage, within the state, participation in, and promotion, development, acceptance and appreciation of, artistic and cultural activities which shall include, but are not limited to, music, theater, dance, painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, films and allied arts and crafts... To this end the agency may join or contract with private patrons, individual artists and ensembles and with institutions, local sponsoring organizations and professional organizations ..." ...All activities..."shall be directed toward encouraging and assisting, rather than in any way limiting, the freedom of artistic expression which is essential for the well-being of the arts. Said commission shall maintain a survey of public and private facilities engaged within the state in artistic and cultural activities and determine the needs of the citizens of this state and the methods by which existing resources may be utilized, or new resources developed, to fulfill these needs."

Public Act No. 579 (1965)
Connecticut General Statutes 10-369
through 373

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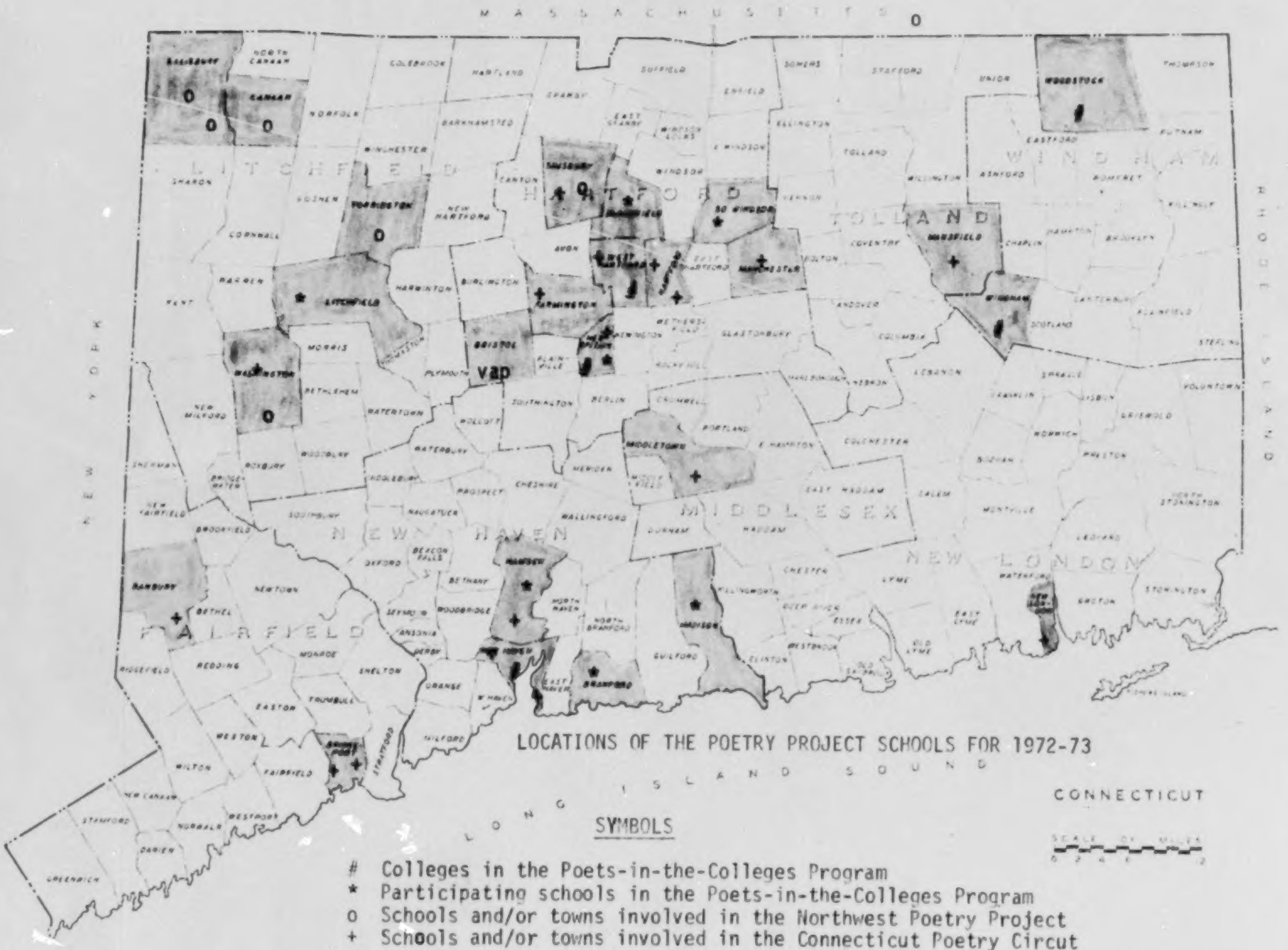
INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1972, the National Endowment for the Arts (Literature Division) granted to the Connecticut Commission on the Arts $20,000 for its poetry in the schools programs for fiscal year 1972-73. The Commission in its grant proposal suggested its programming direction: Poets-in-the Colleges Program -- *Students preparing for teaching careers in English will work extensively with visiting poets as part of their training for teacher certification. Through workshops conducted at the college and through practice teaching with the aid of the participating poets, teacher candidates and the visiting poets will explore the creative process in writing in order to arrive at new attitudes toward the teaching of writing and literature in the public schools and new ways of motivating children to write and think creatively.*

This report documents five projects which were funded by the Commission through the special NEA grant, as well as three others which were funded through general federal funds earmarked for Commission education programs. All projects (with one exception) were funded on a fifty-fifty matching basis with half of the funds coming from colleges, boards of education and other local sources. All eight poetry projects were seen as innovative programs, designed either to promote and facilitate changes in teacher training methods or to provide schools with direct experiences with poets through readings and classroom workshops. Five projects dealt specifically with student teachers, and of the five, three (Central, Southern, University of Hartford) included poets and student teachers working with cooperating schools and the pupils there. The other two college projects (Eastern, Annhurst) were conducted exclusively on the college campuses with student teachers who had completed their practice teaching. The Memorial Boulevard project was a Visiting Artists Program and did not involve student teachers, but rather focused on pupils and teachers working with a poet. Both the Northwest Poetry Project and the Connecticut Poetry Circuit have for a number of years invited poets to Connecticut to read and run workshops for students. The Northwest project has concentrated on secondary schools in the Northwest part of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Poetry Circuit has brought poets to read at colleges in Connecticut, and has also provided student poets opportunities to read for fellow students while still attending a college in the state.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CANAAN
NORTH CANAAN
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CONNECTICUT
SCALE OF MILES
0 2 4 6 8

LOCATIONS OF THE POETRY PROJECT SCHOOLS FOR 1972-73

SYMBOLS

# Colleges in the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program
* Participating schools in the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program
o Schools and/or towns involved in the Northwest Poetry Project
+ Schools and/or towns involved in the Connecticut Poetry Circut
vap School representing the Visiting Artists Program

PROJECTS, COLLEGES	PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	POETS	ADMINISTRATORS, SUPERVISORS
Central Conn. State College, New Britain	Pulaski H.S., New Britain Litchfield H.S., Litchfield Timothy Edwards Jr. H.S., South Windsor	Gerald Hausman	Diane Shugert Roger Zieger
Southern Conn. State College, New Haven	Michael Whelan Jr. H.S., Hamden Hand H.S., Madison Branford Jr. H.S. Branford H.S., Branford	Ross Talarico	Elizabeth Hahn
University of Hartford, Hartford	Bloomfield Jr. H.S., Bloomfield	Terry Stokes	Lee Yosha
Eastern Conn. State College, Willimantic	none	Jim Humphrey	Jim Lacey
Annhurst College, Woodstock	none	Leo Connellan	Helen Bonin
Visiting Artists Program	Memorial Boulevard School, Bristol	Leonard Halpin	James White
Northwest Poetry Project	listed in chapter	listed in chapter	William DeVoti
Conn. Poetry Circuit	listed in chapter	listed in chapter	Jean Maynard

This report also includes an evaluation of the projects at Central and Southern Connecticut State Colleges. The instruments for the evaluation were designed by Morris Cogan of the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. Dr. Cogan is a professor of education and chairman of the University's division of teacher education. His major interests are the education of teachers, curriculum, supervision and international education. He is also a poet and photographer.

Seven chapters in this report were edited by Kathleen Meagher. Jean Maynard wrote the chapter on the Connecticut Poetry Circuit. Kathleen visited all the projects with the exception of the Visiting Artists Program at Memorial Boulevard School in Bristol in preparation for the writing of this publication. Ms. Meagher is a poet from North Haven, Connecticut. She has published poetry and articles and has taught in a number of New Haven Schools. She has been an administrative assistant with the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, and is currently enrolled in the Goddard College External Degree Program. The tedious task of typing the final copy for this publication was done by Maureen Ferrara, research assistant with the Arts Commission. Her patience and expertise have been critical to this report being completed.

As project director for the program and supervisor of this report, I have had the pleasure of working with Morris and Kathleen, as well as the poets, student teachers, teachers, supervisors and pupils associated with the projects. The collective efforts of all these people have made the projects and this report possible.

The intent of the report is twofold . . . first, we hope the chapters convey the personality of each project and provide useful information on how each poet worked with either student teachers or pupils. Teachers and administrators thus may gain insights into how a poet's understanding of the creative writing process might aid them in their teaching. Secondly, the clinical evaluation of the Central and Southern projects will hopefully provide educators and planners critical data on how the participants felt and thought about their involvement in the two projects, which most approximated the Arts Commission's project description.

While it was our intention to focus on the classroom experiences of student teachers and pupils, we found that the innovative nature of the program caused numerous administrative difficulties. These are reflected throughout the evaluation report and at various times are touched upon in the chapters, although in many cases it was not possible to present detailed accounts of these difficulties. While it has always been a policy of the Arts Commission to expose problems of this nature in order to be helpful in finding solutions, some situations were impossible to unravel with fairness to all concerned. Those who actively participated in the programs and presented materials for this publication will hopefully find their passions expressed and their concerns reflected in the chapters. This was our intention and we hope we honored it. Most of all, we hope that this publication will inspire those engaged in education to seek and develop diverse and exciting programming for prospective teachers and pupils in elementary and secondary schools. We feel an open and probing attitude is critical at this juncture in American Education, and we respectfully submit this report for your explorations. We hope you have an enjoyable and worthwhile adventure.

DIRECTORY OF AMERICAN POETS

A Directory of American Poets, published in 1973 through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, has an alphabetical listing by state of poets and writers available for readings and workshops. It gives their addresses, phone numbers, teaching preferences, and languages spoken by each author. There is a second alphabetical listing of minority writers: Black, Spanish-speaking, Chicano, American Indian, Asian American. A service section in the back of the directory lists anthologies, films and videotapes, materials for writing teachers, information about records, audiotapes, little magazines, grants and awards available to U.S. writers, suggestions for organizers, and other materials.

Copies of the Directory cost $4.00 and may be purchased from

POETS AND WRITERS, INC.
201 West 54th Street
New York, New York 10019

We would encourage any educator interested in working with poets or providing resources for teachers of creative writing to obtain a copy of this directory.

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE
NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT

"Ooo-look!"

The grass was cool, damp, sweet.
Five of us were sprawled on the lawn
kicking and screaming in delight
like children.

Mr. Goldstein said,
"Those disgusting kids are having
an orgy."

Our shouts of "Ooo-look!" and "I
saw one!"
echoed in the night.

His wife said,
"No, dear they're seeing things.
They must be on drugs."

(I guess they didn't know about
the meteor shower.)

-- Gail Noren, pupil
Pulaski High School

What happens when we put our imaginations into practical reality? How do we live with the conflicts? Are we able to listen to what people are saying: the ambivalence, the contradictions, how an outcome differs from an expectation?

At Central Connecticut State College in New Britain the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program is in its second year. Familiarity with the program and careful planning with definite project purposes and objectives backed up by innovative ideological intentions did not prevent (nor prepare anyone for) the turmoil in the Spring 1973 semester. In the previous year's program (described in Artists In The Classroom, Connecticut Commission on the Arts, 1973, pp. 98, 104) relations strained to the breaking point. Blame was placed mostly on the poet for recalcitrant behavior and inciting the same in students. Administrators conceded failure of project objectives. However, this year a spirit of willingness from what was learned from the past launched the new program with energy and positive feelings.

Poet. Gerald Hausman, 27, an English Literature major from New Mexico Highlands University, taught woodcraft and creative writing as a camp counselor for six years. A teacher of English and Creative Writing in a private school for five years, he ran poetry workshops for children in the Pittsfield, Massachusetts public school system, published his third book of poems, Circle Meadow, The Bookstore Press, was one of the editors of the Berkshire Anthology, is a partner in a publishing company, and frequently does public readings. What Gerry calls his "story," in its entirety as he wrote it, is included in this chapter following the reports of student teachers.

Pupils. Three Schools. Litchfield, ninth graders from a wealthly New England village in the scenic Berkshire foothills. Timothy Edwards, highest level eighth graders from a middle class section of Windsor, a town on the periphery of Hartford's urban sprawl. Pulaski honor students and non-college eighth graders, many of them from working class families with strong ethnic ties, New Britain, also in the Hartford area.

Student Teachers. They speak from their journals, from the schools in which they taught in the above order.

Administrators, Diane Shugert, Methods teacher and coordinator for the poetry program and Roger Zieger, supervisor of student teachers at Central Connecticut State College.

LITCHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Bud Stillman cooperating teacher at Litchfield asked pupils to write their thoughts about the three weeks of poetry on the last day of class. The kids didn't have to sign their names. The following sections from their papers are, for the most part, those bracketed by Bud as representing both personal and honest views.

I got to know a little more about myself and even more about the other people in the class. I don't like to write about incidents or factual things. I like to write about thoughts, something like Indian Summer.

I liked the idea of not having any form for the poems. It gave me a much more flexible way to write. I think it would be easier to write poetry now than it was before.

Reading and writing poetry has turned from a boring thing into an enjoyable thing. And I will want to read more poetry now that I know it is fun.

With the assignments we have been given, they made my imagination grow and made me think more about my writing. I learned to describe and show feeling. The best thing that I liked was that we could write what we feel.

The poetry we had to write and listen to was different so it was worth writing about and listening to.

I'm not the greatest poet in the world, as a matter of fact I thought I was the worst, but Gerry said, "Nobody can be a bad poet, all of us have our own styles."

I found for the first time since sixth grade, I looked forward to English class.

I've learned things about poetry and about my feelings and ability to deal with poetry, that I either didn't know or was afraid to show. Before Gerry came, I think the class didn't take poetry quite as serious and would laugh at any gut attempt to really speak up.

Another reason I liked the three weeks was because we had no homework. I think it is great to be able to learn something without always running home to sit inside and work more.

I like it when you skip around doing many things instead of just working on one single boring topic.

The past three weeks have been very good. What we did helped us to use our minds instead of just grammar, or books. We got experience in writing good poetry, and we *got it from a poet. I thought the workshops were excellent, having three teachers (poet, cooperating teacher, student teacher) instead of just one also gave a flavor to the class.*

I didn't really care for the poet, personally, but when you get going on something, I guess it really doesn't matter. Some days you don't feel like writing or you feel kinda shitty; but we still had to write. I thought it was good because it let me get my emotions out in writing. It also was nice to come into class on a Friday knowing there was no homework and there won't be any over the week end.

To tell you the truth I was shocked to see that the school let him in. Usually they turn down anything worth something. I got more out of this class than any "lecturing". Another important point was that we weren't always being treated as ignorant, little "bleeps." Gerry kept telling us that we had something and that we weren't a crock of shit.

I never realized how many different ways there were to look at poetry.

He didn't care about grammer, just the poem. I wasn't forced to do something or what the teacher wanted.

On March 19 when I made a visit to the Litchfield ninth-grade, opinions about a class assignment differed. Gerry read part of a story from Hemingway and asked the pupils to finish it in their own way. Ann Blake, student teacher, thought this was too difficult, that the kids were puzzled and didn't understand what was wanted of them. I felt there was confusion and resistance at first, but kids started writing when Gerry insisted they do it anyway. He told them to listen and try and find out what happens.

Jim Simoncelli had caused a lot of trouble in class as part of a group of boys who put down poetry. But he wrote an ending to Hemingway's story, "In Our Time":

I was the first reporter there, they would only let me in. It was up to me to get the U.S. the top story in the fastest amount of time. War was all around us, bombs from the harbor, shells from the ships. Death on the pier. It was the year Zoss. The nuclear weapons, that was it. The new babies didn't have a chance with the bombs and radiation. All the dead were put in the water until the water was dead. What a story. Now I will be the top reporter in the U.S..

Gerry read or described other situations asking pupils to write their impressions quickly as these came. Jim Simoncelli continued:

He was my great great grandson. He was 79 years old. He was a banker in the years 1950 through 1970. He was a hard man but wasn't that bad. He was the head of part of the world, he dealt with money and of course where there's money there's going to be people. One unfortunate person was so confused he killed my *great great grandson. It's been a long time. The visit will be fun. I only see him through my television scope that pictures earth.*

Gerry preferred to work in small groups of eight or ten pupils (the same with student teachers at the college). He feels it's important to get to know students, and in a large class this is impossible. Ann Blake, Bud Stillman and Gerry planned workshops with three rotating groups of about eight pupils each. They worked on the same agreed upon assignment using their own choice of materials or did separate exercises. Gerry felt this worked well. Ann didn't: "Groups made for private sessions hard to record, although the class was good and the results were good." Gerry stayed with the same group of nine boys. Ann said there was "blatant bias on his part."

In her journal Ann records the first week as interesting and fun, but By Wednesday of the second week (in retrospect) the program went downhill. Ann: Bud's role emerges as recorder of Gerry's sessions, not a leader or participant. Me off on my own with some small bag of tricks culled from work at Central and my own reading." She speaks of two successful days with her group but felt the growing consensus was, after initial excitement wears off what is the substance? She took another group. *My kids were feeling justifiably left out. Gerry took them at my urging. No directions from Gerry. Do what you want. You know what to do. Poor results. Gerry complained of lethargy and lack of creativity. First tirade on schedules hindering creativity ... why should poets have to buy into the system of time modules? Why does he have to suffer with first periods and last periods. Gerry complains of Bud's non-participation.*

On Monday, March 26, beginning the last week, Ann writes: *Gerry very late. Bud and I have nothing planned. Gerry arrived with Seeger's Indian Summer and played this. Kids write poem telling what they heard. After some discussion (mostly boys) kids are asked to rework. First time some writing discipline has been asked of them. Some reshape, most did not since Gerry was reading aloud. Shugert and Zieger observing. Fair results. Those kids with powers of observation, insight, etc. do well. However all are writing. All kids are caught up in poet charisma.*

The last three days, no poetry. A mix up about a guest poet's cancelled reading and Gerry didn't come to class; a day of autographing his books and reading his poetry, photographer in class; a day with guest poet, Gerry very late ... I had to keep on going about nothing until he arrived. Nothing happened. Gerry sat and talked with idolatrous *few and others did what they wanted. Bud left. I followed shortly.*

From Ann's summary: *Ten days out of the potential fifteen kids did some writing. Program should have ended after second week. Nothing accomplished in third week. Rotten feeling engendered within the English Department and between Gerry and Bud. The kids benefited most from the program. This is the one area for which I have something positive to say. They enjoyed the three weeks and were oblivious to the growing dissatisfaction. They were opened up and freed to write what they wanted. Acceptance worked wonders. But anything was accepted. No disciplined writing. The exercises were an end unto themselves. Gerry's goal was to have kids discover poetry in themselves. And they did become genuinely excited about their power over paper. But the pupils who worked most excellently (quality of poetry) did so anyway and in spite of, not because of Gerry. What the students enjoyed most was their "jail-break". It was my extraordinary task to return them to academe after Gerry. What I learned was in the main inverse or negative--close observation of workshop techniques in the methods course served me better than non-direction from Gerry.*

Ann's conclusion: bitterness. "It's hard to separate the personal experience of the poet from the poetry program."

The events at Litchfield are given at length, not because they are negative or indicate failure. Broad differences about what education means are behind much of the conflict. Some objectives of the poetry program, for the kids, did happen. It was the adults who could not communicate with one another and who seemed to labor in vain.

TIMOTHY EDWARDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

At Timothy Edwards Middle School the pupils liked the poetry program so much they continued to write on their own between Gerry's visits.

A boy on a fence climbing
trying to get to greener pastures
smiling at the sun, feeling its
setting
rays warm his skin. After it is
gone he comes in from the dark
now waiting for tomorrow's sun.

-- (no name), pupil

The Blackboard

A black piece of rock
where you write educational things
with a piece of concentrated dust
It uses these things
then they are erased away
and fall to the floor
where nobody notices them
anymore.

-- (no name), pupil

Spring is nature's distribution
of love.

-- (no name), pupil

Parachutes billow and they look
like they're stretched over
a big ball. Hi. This music
sounds like a merry-go-round
and in some places like merry-
go-round music. Tuesday is
green. He sounds like he is up
in the air, maybe up in a
balloon. Shadows don't always
look grey. Rotten rafters
splinter with long jagged edges.
Tinny organ music always
sounds like a death march
especially if it's notes are
drawn out and long. Moonlight
glows. Even silence is noisy.
Flowers grow slowly. I wish I
could watch flowers' petals unfold.
Day can feel darker than night.
If you could hear a knife
slashing through paper very loud
I know what it would sound like.
You feel very heavy when you're
sad. Sometimes when I'm in
church, during prayer, I feel as
though the bench is way up
almost on the ceiling. I
like Thursday. Elephants look
quiet. I feel like my desk is
enclosed in a shell and the
rest of the desks are outside.
I've never seen a groundhog.
Turtles' skins look pebbley. Those
carpet samples look flat.

-- (no name), pupil

Debbie Forghetti, student teacher at Timothy Edwards, thinks maybe her expectations were too high. "At the beginning many of the pupils were hesitant to write, didn't know what to write. These highest level eighth-grade classes need to know exactly what is being asked of them. They want an explanation or an end product to strive toward." Debbie thinks creativity flourishes when unrestricted, "but there should be a tying together of activities, some sort of continuity, and a sense of purpose. This is an area which could be improved upon for future programs." Is the problem too little structure, or that pupils (and student teachers) are conditioned to expect to be told exactly what to do?

The attitudes of student teacher Susan Hayden, also at Timothy Edwards, were affected by Gerry's work with pupils. "When I discovered that Gerry was going to explore poetry with my class I was apprehensive. I had some pretty smart kids and they used their intelligence to get away with every trick in the book. They were con artists and trouble makers and they were anything but afraid of authority or anyone who tried to get them to do anything. My first class with them they tried to send me screaming out the door." When Gerry came, "They looked up at him and they stopped trying to figure and they actually listened! They were interested!" Just before Spring vacation the kids "began to run stale. We took them out into the orchard hoping to give them more stimulation, but I don't think this was extremely successful. They were more interested in picking dandelions and climbing trees than writing poetry. These were seventh graders and still very much little children at heart." Susan mentions in her journal, *Just being able to call him Gerry instead of Mr. Hausman was a big factor in how they related to him. He was not an authority figure who would stamp them into the ground if they did not perform well. The poorest performance was seen when the cooperating teacher insisted that everyone turn in a poem with their name on it. The last time we met with Gerry we split into groups and discussed each others' poems. I felt sure that they would take personal prejudices into account and not seriously discuss the poems. I was happily wrong again. They were very critical of the poems they looked at and were even objective toward their own poetry.* Susan definitely felt the poetry program was successful, "The pupils loved it and continued to write uninitiated."

PULASKI HIGH SCHOOL

Mark Kostin, student teacher at Pulaski, felt his own learning was greater during the methods course, and working with Gerry in the poetry workshops at the college improved his writing talents and gave him direction for teaching creative writing. He began with poetry workshops on his regular practice teaching days. The honor pupils who petitioned to get the course enjoyed writing poems; but they wanted a wider variety of assignments. Mark provided these, the pupils reacted favorably, and Mark decided to leave the poetry workshops to Gerry's visits. Pupils also worked on outside poetry projects, and the writing equalled much of the poetry done in class. Mark often comments that the pupils and the cooperating teacher were confused as to the purpose of assignments. They felt instructions were unclear. When Gerry gave two successive readings in class, the students enjoyed listening. "For the first time they understood where Gerry was coming from. If he had given a reading earlier, they might have reacted more favorably to him."

The general confusion for pupils as well as the cooperating teachers Mark blames on the school. "No one was ever told what was going on. The classrooms were often filled with observers which upset the pupils. They didn't like the idea of being guinea pigs. Only once did a supervisor from Central sit in on the class. When asked if he would partake in the workshop, he refused."

The last paragraph in Mark's journal, "In the beginning of the program the morale of the English

Chairman and the cooperating teachers was high. They, like many others, were impressed by the magic word 'poet'. It soon became evident that their morale was going downhill. This seemed to be a result of, 1) their not knowing what was going on and, 2) I think they expected too much."

Ann Dorfman speaks from her journal. *I really enjoyed the poetry program and working with Gerry. I'm pleased with the results and so are the students. From their beginning attitude of wanting no part of a poet to now, the end of the program, they admit to liking it. The class liked Gerry and thought that for the time he came, he was worthwhile.*

I'm confused as to the aims and objectives of the program. This confusion should be stated as a complaint. No one (myself, the cooperating teacher, or Mark) knew what was expected or how to really go about it. We were supposed to work with Gerry but never really did. If the poet was also supposed to help the student teachers teach, I received very little help. Neither Barbara (cooperating teacher) nor Gerry offered the guidance I needed, and it could have been so much better. With Gerry not even coming the last week, I am just very disappointed and can't make any judgement as to Gerry or why he didn't come until he tells me himself.

My other major complaint has to do with the organization of the program. Why-How-When-and What. The teachers, pupils, and student teachers should be fully aware of what's expected. We were not. The program should definitely be continued but with better planning.

I don't want to be redundant but there was so little supervision and guidance. For a program of this nature, I was hardly observed at all. Never mind during my regular classes but during Gerry's visits--where were the people from the college? One visit from Roger Zieger on an off-day is hardly enough and I should think Diane Shugert would have been interested enough to attend. But that doesn't surprise me because she never attended one of Gerry's workshops during the methods course. One brief word on that--I learned very little during either of my methods courses and was totally (or almost totally) unprepared to face a real class.

The class Gerry worked with is a C-level group (communications non-college). The kids are so conditioned and structured that it almost can't be broken. I have no doubt that Gerry could communicate with these kids but there just wasn't enough time--six disorganized workshops with unclear goals just isn't enough.

After a discussion with Richard Place, Gerry, Barbara, Mark and myself, Ann wrote: "...it was then that I found out it [the poetry program] was considered to be a failure. I didn't understand this and discussed it with Mark. Despite what they were all saying, the kids were writing poetry--what more could anyone want? Mark and I wondered just what the program was supposed to achieve."

GERRY'S STORY

Tell It To George

The school doesn't belong here
huge buildings on the orchards
plowed-out to make baseball mounds
I've had a lot of thoughts in mind
but where do you put a school
like mine?

Beck's Butt

I see a pen
on Beck's
rearend.

Spring

Spring is the heat of the sun
it's so hot I can't write
any poems for you.

So you can't read
any of my great poems
so that's the end of that!

(from Timothy Edwards)

All three poems reflect the feelings of kids who are happily out of the classroom.

The first two titles are examples of my emphasis on putting down what you see, hear feel exactly as it happens. When unable to write another kind of poem, express your own inability to write.

In order to go outside during scheduled class hours at Timothy Edwards, the teacher must submit a reason to the principal. This can result in making the teacher feel, consciously or otherwise, that the outdoor experience is only useful if the kids really produce something. I saw this implication in some of the students' writing: it was forced, produced under the unspoken, but ever-present demand on their heads. I think I helped to loosen some restraints by sitting with one group & urging them to enjoy the sun & to write about dried-up wormy apples, or a nearby baseball game, or not to write at all; just listen to conversations floating in the blue air.

Poetry is in our heads before it is written down. It comes from a state of mind - the sense of "I can do anything...climb a ladder to the sun."

I work all the time trying to create an atmosphere where poetry is at least possible.

One girl said: "But what good is it if I feel free for one or two hours? I still have to go to school, & there's all that Reality out there."

All That Reality is what I'm fighting every day I enter a public school where the kids have to have a reason to go outside with their teacher.

Late, everybody left,
Didn't know where they were.
Went out to bench,
Drinking
Went back in,
Danced
Went back out
Finished it off
WENT BACK IN
WENT BACK OUT
Ran into picnic table
Went
home

Moonlight swimming
Image of a shark
in the moon.

(from Litchfield)

I got a bunch of rowdy boys at Litchfield High into a small circle & told them a story. "Write down only what you want to hear, only what interests you when I'm talking." I told them that there was great poetry in everyone's everyday voice; in jabber heard & misheard, in interrupted conversations, snatches of words overheard in the hall- just plain talk as in William Carlos Williams' poem about the plums. I emphasized that their "poem" taken from my story should be in the form of notes & jottings & should be as illogical as my thought patterns. Following my story, each student told one of his own, which the rest of us wrote down and afterwards read aloud so that we could hear how the spoken voices were subtly transformed into poetry.

Nothing to do or say
just sit around watching
the world change with us

Loneliness is the shadow of the
weak,

Following; sticking
to their un-looked upon bodies.
Until one day,
they fall dead and decay.
But who cares! Many more
will follow with tears much.

(from Litchfield)

If you don't preach form or order in poetry, if you just let it happen by presenting something for the mind's eye to take hold of, (as I did with a photograph portraying two old people in The Berkshire Anthology), surprisingly, you may get a poem rich in form, a poem that springs from the unconscious with pure & amazing exactness.

The preceding poem, "Nothing To Say", is a joy to look at for me because it proves that you can't ever presume to teach anyone where or how to break a line, or start or stop a poem. (Notice the poem's careful placement of words & use of punctuation.)

Trees sleeping
Peacefully
Not worried
About tomorrow.
Houses
Made from their
Brothers and sisters

(from Litchfield)

Gazing out the window & daydreaming are our greatest passtimes, whether we like to admit it or not. I encouraged Danny, a boy who was part Indian, to look out the window with me & stare a while. Then I wrote a quick poem about what I saw on the same page, Danny wrote his own vision.

Who am I?
I am one of the
Infinitesimal parts
of the one split
into dust like
a diamond
crushed by a hammer.

(from Litchfield)

Later, after I'd shown him how closely related some concrete poetry (Clark Coolidge's "The Which Ways" in The Berkshire Anthology) was to math-Danny's best subject, English being one of his weakest--Danny wrote the above, which I think is a remarkable poem for a non-writer.

At is where the end
of
that is.
*

The end of forever
is like the end of
never.
*

The beginning of the end
of one
is none.
*

(from Litchfield)

Each of the above were written in the style of Clark Coolidge by Danny.

Dream

It's an old penny
It's a monstrous penny
There's two of them.
Hey, they're probably worth
money.
There's an old man coming
toward me,
"Come in my house."
I go in and see dirt. All over.
COBWEBS, COBWEBS.
A watch. It's very dirty.
Too bad. I'll clean it.

Now it's nice and shiny runs
like a gem.

(from Litchfield)

Out of a class of thirty, only one boy responded to my suggestion that everyone write down a dream he or she had -- this was to be done at home, while all my other workshops happened in the classroom. I wasn't disappointed that I only got one poem the following day because the boy who handed it to me was a labeled "troublemaker & wise-guy" who'd produced nothing. He'd been kicked out of the class by the cooperating teacher on the second day & had returned because he said he really wanted to work. He was an extremely intelligent boy who'd used his brains to be a lousy kind of leader; who ruined classes by treating everything as a joke. He was looking out of new eyes when he decided to scribble his dream for me and he remained an excited and helpful learner who aided me by showing the other boys he could out-write & out-think the best of them. More than once he proved himself the best poet in the class. His dream reflects his "change", his duality, his pleasure at seeing himself in a changed light.

San Jose California
on my 1000 cc Harley
trying to see
all there is.
I have all
the time
in the world,
ain't nothing
going to
hold me
back

(from Pulaski)

I base many of my workshops on the idea of free-association; having everyone write tons of words on the board & then making one or more into poems. Or I try just going around the room writing odd, illogical, crazy words on the students' papers. Sometimes I try to choose words which fit with a particular student's dress, facial expression, or something he says about his likes or dislikes. The above poem was written by a boy who was almost failing English. My associative words written at the top of his paper were: "Black Madonna Blue Eyed Motorcycle Queen."

Later, the same boy wrote a motorcycle treatise called, "The Maico in Flight" which had the style of Ernest Hemingway's longer sentences. It was a full page of writing, truly vivid, about a motorcycle race & there wasn't a single grammatical error.

School is
a rotten old red brick building
a principal with a tie and briefcase
that follows you around
and always has nothing to do
a party car with no windows
which takes us to school
a girl in a room surrounded
by guys: ooh, what to do!

a period outside watching a car
go by
some people we know
one of those things
a time to stay home and sleep

(from Pulaski)

I sketched an outline of words and incomplete sentences which the student incorporated & utilized in the above poem. He'd dropped into the morning class with nothing to do & some curiosity about what I was like. This student was a gang member, a dropout, a blackjacket wearer, who had absolutely nothing to do with school. He seemed to appreciate my being some kind of outsider & we had several raps together before he wrote his poem.

In this school
you travel from class to class
not walking,
but on motorcycles
tearing around the library
obeying the sign on the librarian's
desk: NO QUIET PLEASE.
You can leave your worst teacher
in a cloud of smoke
and wrack your old chicks up
around the spokes.

(from Timothy Edwards)

The above poem was written by still another wise-guy who bugged me right from the start by calling me a "poet-psychiatrist" when I asked him to tell me how he felt about a bunch of posters in the classroom. He became cooperative, but usually grumbly later on, until one day we (about 6 or 7 kids) met in the library & talked about the possibilities of an ideal school, a school where anything could happen. He refused to write, complained & wised-off at first. But when I told him I worked at a school (Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts) where the kids rode their bikes into class (a total fabrication), his face brightened, he asked to hear all about it, and while I spun my fable, he wrote his poem. Afterwards, I told him I'd been kidding, but I made him realize his poem was great and I showed it to the class & they praised it aloud; seeing in it their own failure to describe a school, not in platitudes, but in concrete, poetic terms.

From the day of your birth
Til you ride in a hearse
Things that were bad
Could have been worse.

(from Pulaski)

I didn't help in the creation of the above poem & it's very possible that the boy who wrote it unconsciously ripped it off Ogden Nash, or someone like him.

What it says is true about teaching poetry. The "bad" poems that I got always showed something, some growth, some reaching, some wishing... and I wished along with them.

I wished for the school that couldn't be dreamed, where the walls were scrawled with nature poems, or openly natural graffiti. (Incidently, one of the most creative poems at Pulaski High was written in chalk on a brick wall & referred to an authority figure "eating breaded praying mantis dicks").

I wished that I didn't have to explain that my "pocketbook" was a bookbag fashioned to look like a pony-express pouch.

I wished for a school in the mountains where for a whole week we lay about in the grass while I read THE ANIMAL FAMILY by Randall Jarrell, & talked & joked about peepers making love & how moss grows deep on the dark sides of stones.

I wished again for that school, but in my wishing I included all the loud or shrunken boys who had big bikes gleaming in the sun.

Black Jackets

So you have put me to the test,

you have laughed at my poetry
to my face,
not out of nervousness
but slantwise
as you would slice a tire
in the parkinglot
as you pissed in some withered
teacher's desk
on purpose
out of pettiness

you placed yourselves
in a world of lacerated leather
& left yourselves there
I have driven past those rusty
junkscapes of Hartford
I have slept under the pink
soul glare of the Stanley Shovel
Works,
where, one by one
you will fall out of leather grace
into the greater loneliness
of steel spark eye sockets
locked out forever
your dream of 1000 cc Harley
Nothing Can Stop Me Now!

yes, something stops you
something more unforgivable than
poetry-laughter

something with larger teeth
than your Harley's sprockets
bigger eyes
than those mad joyspokes
wheeling your ambitions
away from mercy

something,
something with the biggest teeth,
the biggest eyes

a merciless nothingness
with no name
that will turn you into so much gum
stuck on the sidewalk,
scraped off shoes

as IT has laughed at my poetry,
IT will laugh at your lives

listen:

I have something
to tell you

-- Gerald Hausman

DIANE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary concern at Central Connecticut State College is to prepare students to teach, and administrators and faculty at the college are well aware of social changes necessitating education reforms. However, in theory, the most diverse people can agree, only to find in practice those divisions that prevent them from working together. Diane Shugert's final report contains this introductory statement: "The way the poet worked with the methods class, the students' response to it, and my and their evaluations of its effect on them and on their teaching, I shall call theory, because there was no opportunity to observe the effects with pupils." But, as the student teachers in the CCSC program point out, pupils are the kids in the schools, the ones we are trying to reach; what is happening with pupils is where we should be.

Diane sees the poet, by nature, unable to fit into school routines. In Gerry's case working with small groups is incompatible with the reality of twenty or more pupils in a classroom. Diane's job is to prepare teachers. It is her feelings that for CCSC students, after three and a half years of being acted upon, the methods course is the only place for them to judge their performance in the classroom, not on a personal basis but according to pupils' interests and responses. In one semester is it possible to reverse three and a half years of imposed conditioning and become an active participant? Gerry's answer might be, no, unless we stop worrying about method and first get to know peoples' feelings.

Diane says: "The poet's method is built on 'fine as you are.' It runs head-on into 'fine as you learn.' He emphasizes the person; I emphasize the teaching." She believes his method works in small groups--her students agreed that the poet did affect them positively--and: "It also works in total environments where teachers and students live together. No public school has tiny classes and live-in students."

Speaking about objectives and administration Diane says, *Everyone feels that, somehow, the program should have been more thoroughly administered. The cooperating teachers should have been told more and their intelligent participation solicited. The student teachers should have been guided earlier and better and more. It should have been possible to intervene and smooth over or resolve difficulties for the poet, between the poet and the cooperating teachers, between student teachers and the schools. But consider the time necessary for those activities.* Diane and Roger Zieger, the supervisor, were asked to meet the program's demands in addition to their regular duties. She feels there are easier ways to do the poetry program which would still benefit all the people and untangle some of the program's continuous snags. Here are her ideas:

1. The Commission should place some poets in secondary schools, contact CCSC, and CCSC would try to place a student teacher there--not with the poet but with access to him. Time period would be much shorter.
2. CCSC by next spring will have initiated a course for pre-student teaching observation. CCSC would take Commission's poet placements and send some interested students to observe and talk with poets.
3. Under the mantle of that course or another course required of prospective teachers but not scheduled for the student teaching semester, CCSC and the Commission jointly would fund a several weeks' workshop with a poet.
4. CCSC and the Commission jointly would fund a several weeks' workshop with a poet. Not for credit, but open to interested prospective teachers.
5. An optional course would be offered as a workshop adjunct to the methods course. Poet would teach it but would not interact with the regular course.

It is Diane Shugert's feeling that if more time had been allotted for the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program at Central it would have been administered properly. But for poet Gerald Hausman and some student teachers, it seems the problems would continue to exist as long as there are basically opposing views about what education means.

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

The Poets-in-the-Colleges Program is about alternatives. What works in one school may not in another. What turns kids on in suburbs may also turn them on in an inner city. Or it may not.

Ross Talarico was poet-in-residence at Southern for the spring semester. He taught an Advanced Creative Writing Course and an eight-week undergraduate course, Education 497, Poetry In the High School. It was from this course that he went with student teachers into the three schools for five-week workshops. He spent part of one day once a week in each school. Ross had attended Syracuse University where he received an M.A. in Creative Writing. He has published a small book of poems, Snowfires. In his class for student teachers he concentrated on the study of contemporary American poetry and development of poetry exercises.

A slim man with a quiet voice, Ross speaks about poetry with unmistakable reverence. "This is what I like doing most, sitting and dreaming, seeing what happens, what words can do." He tells pupils he enjoys the exercises he will be doing with them because he discovers new poems, new parts of poems in himself from listening to what he and pupils write. He asks them: Isn't that why we read poetry, to hear other voices, to find the voices speaking to us in a poem?" Often Ross does not mean peoples' voices. He wants to know what the pencil has to say to us, or a window, a tree, or

The Body

I've been here, in this field,
For a long time.
My winds blow lazily.
If I rest, now,
I know the grass will cover me
And spread any strength
I have left
To the huge sleep
Of the earth.

So I stand still,
For a moment, and let my life
Settle into the barren tree
Of its posture.
Sunlight drops some dust
On my shoulders
As I step forward
Out of the body
That stands in a field for as long
As I'm walking away.

-- Ross Talarico, from Snowfires

Ross thinks poetry is for the "average" pupil. He questions its value in inner city schools or for pupils who may have too many problems. "Poetry is not therapy or bread on the table," he stated in an interview. Perhaps this shows his preference for a particular teaching environment rather than a belief that poetry won't work in areas of varied social background.

HAND HIGH SCHOOL

A class of junior honor pupils from a wealthy community can feel as inhibited about poetry as other kids, but for different reasons. Daniel Hand High School is set in the open country outside the town of Madison on the Connecticut shore. The people are proud and protective of an historical tradition maintained in the restored colonial homes and lush gardens. More than in other shore towns, resistance to incursions isolates Madison but in a way which seems to satisfy the people who live there. At Hand High School, kids had an academic awe for poetry and preconceptions about what poems should be: -- formal, metered, stanzas and "poetic" words and phrases.

When Gretchen Woelfle, student teacher, explained the first exercise combining three objects and three activities the kids complained they couldn't write on demand. Ross explained that playing with words, shuffling them around into different positions gets our imagination out of old ruts and sends us exploring. Still, the kids had definite ideas about what a poem should be. When asked to read what they wrote, most of them were shy and reluctant, even though Gretchen insisted this was not poetry but word games. Ross read his poem from the exercise and the kids felt intimidated. He tried to deemphasize the image of poetry as a precious activity limited to a few people with talent or genius. He wanted kids to know great works were not expected of them, to relieve their anxieties so they could write about their everyday lives. But Ross' repetition of "Don't worry; you don't have to try this; it doesn't really matter that much; you don't have to write poetry," was picked up by Gretchen and got a comparably negative reaction from the kids. What I saw happen in most classes was "well, if it doesn't matter that much, then why are we doing it? why should I bother?" And sometimes they didn't.

Although Gretchen spoke in the beginning of her journal about the class being highly motivated and talkative, they remained unsure about reading and writing their own poems and were more interested in what others wrote. She felt enthusiasm dwindle, until, in the last days of the workshop, "there was outright defection, particularly from the 'writers.'" I observed that exercises and assignments were given like directions to be followed--and being good pupils they followed. The last entry in Gretchen's journal, May 17: "But they do accept the poetry program without complaint, without much clear idea of the purpose, and she adds, "I sympathize with this last sentiment."

A freshwomen-men class, also at Daniel Hand, is where William Lutz did his student teaching workshop. As the juniors were called "honors", these kids were called "slow learners". In this system known as labeling or tracking, kids begin to perceive themselves as perceived by teachers and the school. Pupils are afraid they won't live up to the achievement level expected of them, and therefore won't experiment or take chances; or they internalize the role assigned them by authority and rebel, some part deep inside telling them, "No, it's not true. I am I and not Them, They." One of the poets in another poetry program remarked: "O you know, the way kids are divided up, sparrows, bluejays, cardinals."

Tuesday, March 3, William Lutz's journal: "First meeting with the pupils. Ross was new to them. He had the attention of the class. We did one exercise: list your favorite song and its first line. Switch papers. Said they didn't want to write about other peoples' ideas." Tuesday, April 3: "A disaster. Ross was no longer new to them. Attitude of class was very belligerent."

The day I visited, the pupils wrote poems to the three objects, three activities exercise. These poems were fresh and fun to hear; many were personal, direct statements of emotions. Ross said one poem was so much like the poetry a poet friend of his writes that he wanted to show the poem to him. The boy was delighted. But Bill continued to feel the pupils weren't going anywhere. When he read a poem: "They enjoyed listening to me talk about the poem much more than they enjoyed writing." On Tuesday, May 1: "In a word, a wasted day. We went outside and accomplished absolutely nothing. Ross didn't feel like working, I didn't feel like working and the kids didn't feel like working."

On the last day there was open hostility and no cooperation. Bill wrote: "This class needs very strong leadership, and I was unsure whether I was leading it or Ross was." The pupils filled out the evaluation questionnaires. They said they liked the program because it was different. Bill was unclear as to the purpose. "I think if done in the future it should be planned much more carefully."

Where do we look when the gap widens between expectation and disappointment? Is it unfortunate if a class of slow learners or honors can't perform for the enthusiasm and input exerted? Maybe we should ask other questions: who are the kids? what do they want to know? how do we go about learning together? And for all of us involved in this process: am I falling back on old concepts rather than constantly re-examining what is happening or not happening? I don't see the "didn't feel like working" day as failure. There are some days people don't feel like working, and it's best to admit it; maybe we could be doing something else we like. If an exercise or lesson "fails", it is usually because we perceive pupils as conglomerants to dump conclusions on rather than as individuals who can make choices. The attitude of schools often fosters this view. Therefore, when a school becomes involved with an innovative program which aims at individual and personal involvement, the pupils do not know how to react. For example, when a poet comes in asking the pupil to be an individual, she/he finds this a strange request, an impossible or bewildering task. And ultimately, the pupil again may feel failure.

BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Branford is a community of 20,444 people, also located on the shore of Long Island Sound. It is an active town, mixing small businesses and leisure pursuits with efforts to keep its history in the old architecture and rural spaces. Middle to upper middle class, the peoples' backgrounds and vocations vary widely, and there is a strong feeling of community spirit.

Cooperating teacher Roy Ogren had two courses for sophomores and juniors: "Surrealism" and "Children and the World of Imagination." Several classes of pupils took each of these courses, and the poetry workshops were conducted as part of the curricula. Donna Mattei, student teacher, remarked in her journal that the pupils in one of her classes were unenthusiastic about writing poetry. When signing up for the course they did not expect or want poetry included. Why weren't the pupils consulted or the poetry workshop adjusted to meet their interests? This was a class Donna was doing without Ross. After seeing Donna and Roy Ogren work in the classroom, I think probably they did adjust assignments to pupils' concerns.

During the five weeks Ross was at Branford High, Donna found he "convinced us more and more that poetry is language beautifully arranged, and if we try to express ourselves in a liberated, free fashion, we will be able to create poetry. The pupils understand they are capable of creative power." She saw that word exercises, with their restrictions, helped free the mind to explore the possibilities of language. The pupils said they felt they were using words in a strange way, but few of the lines in their poems sounded strange or contrived. Ross stressed everyday words. He said big words creep into bad poems: reality, fantasy, freedom--they mean everything so they mean nothing.

They sat in the field
And the sun was warm and it
invited them.
Then they talked for a while
And the sun invited them again

The people got up and went away.
Ignoring the warm invitation.

-- Chester, pupil

In some of Donna's classes pupils were interested in the craft of poetry and there were discussions about skills and tools, meter, form, rhythm, imagery, symbolism; and they read modern poets. Donna was sure that the atmosphere of the poetry writing periods, being relaxed, unpressured and ungraded allowed pupils to remember poetry writing can be fun.

I visited Branford High on April 11th and talked with Roy Ogren before class started. He had begun writing again after letting it go for years. In the fall semester he is going to do writing workshops based on what he learned from Ross. The exercises spurred his imagination and led him to create exercises of his own. While Ross and Donna did the class, Roy sat with the pupils and with obvious enjoyment participated in the writing. If pupils responded creatively, as Donna's journal indicates, my guess is they felt their interests were being listened to and shared by their teacher. This kind of atmosphere is supportive to the poet, and I think Ross was able to give more of himself because of it.

"Upon observing the pupils' attitudes toward a poet coming into class, I was impressed by the fact that their interest in poetry rose, and they were stimulated by his presence. The classroom was quiet. I feel this was due to the pupils hanging on every word Ross spoke and respect for him as a poet." This is Judith Bowe speaking in her student teacher's journal about her class at Branford High. She says she benefited from the Poetry in the High School course at the college and the poetry program. "Now I can read poems and discuss them. Contemporary poems are of interest to high school pupils. The language is relevant to now, and they can understand modern poetry and relate to it." For Judy, the program materials in the way of word exercises did encourage pupils to write and helped give them an inner sense of poetry or what a poem is. An uncomfortable moment came when Ross felt that a batch of poems Judy had chosen for the class came into direct conflict with ideas he had been trying to stress. He dominated the class and she felt her lesson failing. She tried to switch to another exercise, but the pupils were uncomfortable and so was she.

Judy told how in one class she mixed pupils' poems with those of famous poets. Some poems were ranked equally by the pupils. "After that, they wrote their names on their poems." A good introduction to a poetry workshop; the pressure was off, and the kids opened up.

Ross or the student teachers usually started the first day of the poetry classes with the object and activities exercise. Kids always responded. It was a game, more active and physical than most writing assignments. Fold a paper in half. On one half, list three familiar objects (a window, a desk, a book); on the other half, list three common actions (staring, eating, walking). Tear the paper in half. Collect all the objects named and re-distribute them so no one has her or his own list; do the same for the actions listed. Write a poem of 10 lines or less using two of the objects and two of the actions, or all three if you wish.

I walked into the class
Sat down on the desk, when
I noticed the clock had yawned.
My chair just drove away from the
seat of my pants.

-- (no name), pupil

As the frail pencil dropped to its
death
Its neighboring book screamed, and
The window slowly fell,
Counting its steps to the sill.

-- (no name), pupil

As I walked to school, the sun feeding
the flowers, I noticed how beautiful
things like a bus could be. As
the bus zoomed by it was like
a bee flying through the air.
When I looked down at the books
I was carrying, it seemed as
though they wanted to talk to me, all
those words clogged up inside
eating away the pages, yearning for
someone to read them.

-- (no name), pupil

Donna Christian, cooperating teacher, sat in the circle with the kids and wrote with them. Her highly personal responses to the exercises when read by Ross with the other papers, showed Donna had lived and felt in ways the kids do. To an exercise about memory and traveling into the past she wrote:

Heading on the highway to
My past.
Route 28 back to Cleveland,
City on the lake,
Polluted and dead.
Then on to Cedar Rapids,
Cement City in a hog's
Cornfield.
City of my grief and despair;
The anguish of my youth.
Highway again,
This time on to Pittsburgh
And its Golden Triangle.
Nostalgia scenes of innocence
And pre-puberty days.
Traveling on to Lake
Mohawk, idyllic Jersey scenes
From preschool days and
The worlds of imagination.
Hit the road for
Stamford where my
Memory must have been
Impressed with sucking and
Feeding, exciting and crying.
Hit the road again--
Back to my mother's womb--
And then on to the gleam in
My father's eye.

Dead end.
And the very beginning,
Of me.

-- Donna Christian,
cooperating teacher

MICHAEL WHELAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Michael Whelan Junior High, Newhall Street, Hamden. This is a big, crowded, city school in a district bordering on the town of New Haven. Some classes are held in an old building where window glass has been replaced by nearly opaque panels. Rooms and hallways have an abandoned look. The life in this building is all in the people, sitting on desks, going in and out of classrooms, gathering in groups to debate and discuss. There is less repression and little of the resulting chaos so often feared as a consequence. Not everything is smooth, but there is vitality and relevance. Several teachers I met, and others gathered at one end of our table in the lunchroom, were warm, concerned people, intensely interested in what is immediate to the pupils and how to provide this with guidance and varied educational possibilities.

Today's Poem

The scent of the winter rain
remains like ruins
A season of sin melts into memory
The days divide us
As do the minutes that bring
us together
Does the light really fade from
the night?
Forgetting my grief
Only time is left.
Under leaves and dead grass
The first blossoms
Caution my clumsy feet.

-- Third period Class,
Collective Poem

Susan Juliano and Barbara Cunningham, student teachers, worked together, with Ross, in three classes of about fifteen pupils each, two eighth and one ninth grade. Much of Susan's journal describes exercises and responses to them. Enthusiasm was high at first, but in two classes interest slackened and attendance dwindled. "At the end of the day, Barbara and I both felt that although we were quite efficient in giving the exercises, we just could not handle talking casually to the kids about their feelings and responses to poetry ... though we lacked this, it was a vital part of running a successful workshop." Susan's comment is applicable in many classrooms: the teacher's ability to be efficient but her/his inability to communicate with pupils. In their second period class, she and Barbara began with a frank and open discussion on why students chose voluntarily to elect the poetry workshop. "They seemed so disinterested most of the time that we felt as if we were forcing them to write. We got on with the class by giving them an exercise." What does it mean to "get on with the class"? Should more question be put to the pupils? Ross began most introductory sessions in the schools with a series of questions: "Does it matter whether or not we write poems? Why are we all here doing this? What is this program about? I don't know, do you?" But often these questions were rhetorical and did not stimulate dialogue.

This pupil found her own dialogue.

Sitting by a tree
Writing a story,
as told to me by
the grass.

and,
People build walls
instead of bridges.

-- Sue Perrotti, pupil

Because of a scheduling system called "packaging", an English class might have a choice of filmmaking, short story writing, Future Project, etc. This meant there were no cooperating teachers during the poetry workshops since they had to stay with the regular English class. Barbara comments in her journal that "This was a drawback in my opinion, for I feel that the teachers would have benefited from and enjoyed the workshop if involved in it." During the poetry sessions various students did not attend because of other interesting things going on. She thought a prior commitment by pupils to stay in the poetry workshop may have altered the attitude of this "least responsive and apathetic" class. She felt much more could have been accomplished with four or five interested people, had the others been allowed to go back to their classes. In a sixth period class consisting of fifteen eighth-grade volunteer pupils where the same commitment was made, Barbara writes: "This group was without question the most responsive, lively and talented. It was an all-girl group with vivid imaginations and marvelously cooperative spirits, willing to try anything we might suggest. They were candid in their answers to questions asked by the poet, and all of them seemed to thoroughly enjoy the experience. Their work was simply wonderful."

Barbara, commenting on practical problems: "At Whalen we faced many obstacles. We were moving between two buildings, the old where the room was far from conducive to creativity and the new, where we had been scheduled to share a large room with another teacher. We carried on classes in a home economics lounge, shuffling chairs from the nearby kitchen area each week. When we could not tolerate the noise in the shared room, we were given another room back in the old building."

In the descriptions of her experiences as the workshops continued, Barbara found many positive things happening. *We shared all writing, not reading names if the students chose to remain anonymous. All of us participated in each session -- gave the exercises, wrote our own poems, read the students' works and ours, and discussed aspects of poetry... students were given the choice of writing or not writing as they wished... Students for the most part were proud of their work and were very willing to read aloud. We as teachers always wrote and read our work as well ... After several weekly sessions I felt freer and was able to write more readily ... I do feel I lacked the experience needed to carry on casual conversation with the students in leading them up to the exercise. The poetry course (at the college) did not offer quite the needed help in this area.*

From a book of poems, A Bouquet of Words, by the poets at Michael J. Whalen Junior High:

My friend and I,
We took a walk,
Down a long, long road.
He squeaked.
His bones rubbed together
And he made a knocking sound,
As the bones of his feet
Hit the cement.
And I,
I walked silently, slowly.
Now not making a sound.
I felt he was unfortunate
Because all that he could see
Was everything in black and white.
And I could see in colors.
And then suddenly,
He crumpled into dust,
On the street he lay,
And I,
All I could do was leave him
For another day.

-- Beth Hardy, pupil

I could love
He could not
I could sing
He could not
I could play
He could not
I could dance
He could not
I could say peace
He would not
He could hate
So could I
He could shout
So could I
He could fight
So could I
He could get angry
So could I
He could say war
So could I
You see I can be like him
But he can't be like me.
I wonder if that's to my advantage

-- Sue, pupil

The massive vehicle.
Big, brutey,
And he,

Who sits on his seat,
A noble throne.
A small bug,
A Volkswagon,
Whizzes by with a chirp.
His truck roars through the
silence.
It breaks the midnight black,
The steady patter of the tires over
The highway like
Little wings
Beating furiously
As the truck driver sits
upon his throne.

-- (no name), pupil

The night patrolman watched
through the wire fence at the
area beyond.
The shadow from the street light
made him appear to have stripes.
Grasping the fence and forcing
his face against it,
His face appeared to be a black
mask.
He thought of how he was encaged
and alone.
Different shadows gave the impression
of him having a long,
bushy tail and sadly,
He surveyed the outside world with
big, black eyes.

-- (no name), pupil

A rock,
Being pushed around from side to side
Levels itself to the feel of the
earth,
Feels the rhythm and sound of a
soft rain,
Knows the job of being a part of
the world,
And quietly
ever so quietly,
Drifts asleep.

-- Anne Pearlin, pupil

Colors

All the tears in the world
combined to form gray.
Revenge and anger formed to make
black.
Giggles and laughter formed to
make yellow.
Vainess and sighing formed to
make purple.
Surprise and shock formed to make
red.
Blond hair and blue eyes formed
to make pink.
White was made of trust and faith.

-- Helena Whelan, pupil

A shade

It fought back the sun again today
Hard-pressed to keep it from
over-heating my room.
It hangs on desperately--body half-
curled,
half-limp, waiting patiently for
the end of the day
Never moving--staunch defender!
I'll stretch you out now
So you and I may fall asleep.

-- Barbara Cunningham, student
teacher

The first year
The dust said nothing.

The second year
The dust said nothing.
Decades go by,
The dust says nothing.
But now it speaks,
It says "I hate you."
What a pity.
All that waiting for nothing.

-- Helena Whalen, pupil

Here I stand,
So quiet and peaceful
The water flowing so cooly,
Feels soft on my feet.
I feel some nervousness,
Because someone might intrude,
On my silence.
I want to dance and sing
Because I am alone,
But I fear that I might stumble
Over a very large stone.

-- Beth Hardy, pupil

As the venetian blinds blinked
in the sunlight
I thought of how nice a day it was,
I thought of how it must be for
someone fighting in a war,
For no reason except he must,
On a nice sunny day like today,
People should love not war.

-- Andy York, pupil

EVALUATION RESPONSES

At Southern Connecticut State College, again, administrators and poet disagreed. Ross Talarico felt unreasonable demands were made and that criticisms of him were used as excuses for failures or faults in the program. Administrative people in the English Department said Ross was often unavailable and inaccessible. Elizabeth Hahn, supervisor of student teachers, in her assessment of the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program wrote: *The college prepared carefully for the poet's stay, acted on impressive credentials from his university, and received a good contribution from the poet while he was meeting only on campus. His work with high school students was also well received. When it was necessary to remind him of precise planning and preparation with the student teachers, I did so, both in writing and orally. I held a planning session in my home for the group, with Ross, as well as on-campus conferences, to assure his reliability.* Although Ross' working relationship with student teachers was beneficial to them, his relationship to college personnel prompted Elizabeth Hahn to conclude: "I resent his exploitation of our good will and his failure to carry through on a job he began well."

In writing his report for this book, Ross began: *I almost decided on no introduction at all--letting the tape, conversations, evaluations, etc. suffice--but perhaps a general statement might, in some way, be helpful:*

If the business of education, during this program were left *to the concerns of the participating poet and students, I would have to say the experience was a very successful one. The students grew: they got to know some basic elements of contemporary poetry; they were able to talk intelligently and with direction about the literature; they not only learned the techniques of the writing exercises, but they absorbed the excitement that comes with such exercises, and they were able, in most of the cases I observed, to pass the excitement on to high school pupils. Of course this is only a beginning, and whether they will be encouraged to create atmospheres of openness and freedom in the classroom (no student was ever forced to write a poem, or sign his name, or hand anything in), I don't know--certainly there is some kind of contradiction between operating such a classroom and translating it into "lesson plans" that administrators and educators ask for in order to formulate some sort of "plan" that* *any* *teacher might use when the social sympathies demand it.*

But the business of education settles in the grave hands of the administrators, supervisors, etc. And in this program, for the most part, they remained uniformed, uncaring, and yet consistently bothersome. I didn't mind the rudeness I encountered from the three deans I came in contact with (Kuslan, Lowe, and Cole), but after a day with an inspiring class, or after observing a student-teacher and feeling good about seeing the learning process take form, I wondered why there was always an attempt to involve me with petty concerns--as if happiness and work were not correlatives! Even the supervisor was constantly reminding me that I was "lucky" to have such and such a schedule. It is the old notion: one makes himself virtuous by convincing himself he is deeply involved in a sacrifice to the arts--in this case everyone was "doing me a favor," and I was going to be reminded of it! It was this attitude that has led me to question the nature of the college's involvement in such a program--I don't see how the school can embark upon the program without having at least a reasonable amount of respect for the artist. Of course, the students and the schools were the last concern: while the deans spoke to me of trouble here and trouble there, and the supervisor spoke soberly of the "negative direction" of the program, over half the students told me that the course was the best one they had ever had at the college. Indeed, if it weren't for the students, I would have left in a week.

I hope the program goes on; I believe in it. But I hope the college will take it seriously, and think of it as essential to the student as a Chaucer or a Milton course. It is.

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

For two years Terry Stokes has taught in the Poets-in-the Colleges Program at the University of Hartford and in the Bloomfield Junior and Senior High Schools in the economically diverse town of Bloomfield which borders Hartford. Three aspects of this program make it unique when compared to the other Poets-in-the-Colleges experiments sponsored by the Arts Commission. It is the oldest, continuing without interruption, going into its third year; it runs for the full school term, from September until June; and the same poet has worked in the program since its beginning. The effects of continuity and the advantage of a familiar person for returning students and pupils can be comparatively viewed along side the turn over and variety of shorter schedules and workshops in the other poetry programs.

BLOOMFIELD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A "typical" poetry day at Bloomfield (I visited the school twice, six sessions in all) is not confined to the classrooms. In the halls pupils greet Terry, want to stop and talk, ask him when he is coming to their class again, and warmly joke with him as with a friend.

The eighth-grade class begins with Terry reading student poems. He doesn't tell the writer's name. "Well, what do you think?", Terry asks. "Copied," answers a boy. "An outlaw wrote it and forgot to sign it," answers another. The pupils are excited about what they like and dislike in the poems. Without second thoughts they speak out, laugh and remark back and forth with each other about their personal reactions. They share their feelings, if contrary or in agreement with the poems.

"Today is a holiday. What day? Buzzard Day. What is the story behind Buzzard Day in Hinkley, Ohio?" Terry tells the story about the town, years ago bringing in buzzards to get rid of rodents. Because the buzzards still come back, although the rodents are gone, the town has a day of celebration. Terry says, "Write a poem, 'The Celebration of Buzzard Day.'"

Buzzard Day

Why do the buzzards keep on
coming back?
They ate all the rodents they were
hired to catch!
Maybe it's the climate maybe it's
the pomp.
Maybe it's just the good old
Hinkley Ohio swamp.

-- Matt Dufort, pupil

There is a lot of fun over this assignment. Many of the poems are humorous, others talk about food and feasts--a favorite subject with the kids. Another assignment growing out of this one is "A National Holiday For Us, A Free Day." If we had a holiday for ourselves, what would we do with it?

Independence Day or Changing Day

All the students become teachers
all the teachers students
all the children adults
all the adults children
all flying creatures land animals
all land animals will fly,
The World's big day has finally
come when cows can fly and
babies rule the world.

-- Bill, pupil

These eighth graders share many of the same attitudes and seem to be in similar places in their lives. They are gregarious and lively. Their teacher is at ease with them. She shows her enjoyment of what is going on and sometimes writes with the class.

The feeling in another room with kids in the same grade is entirely different. Half the pupils are black and half are white, and they tend to stay together in their own groups. "Today you are going to interview yourself." Terry's manner is almost stern. He is warm and friendly but directive. He moves around the class and sits on his heels to be at desk level while talking to the pupils. The class quickly gets to work. Many of them decide they want to interview each other. This is fine with Terry. He gives his attention to the person he is talking to and is not concerned with disciplining the noisy conversations. His awareness of the whole class is apparent. He is quick to notice a boy who starts to leave the room, comes back with him and after a few minutes of talk gets him to join a small group. An argument begins in a corner of the room. Terry sits down with these kids. He works with them for ten or fifteen minutes until they are able to get into the interviews again on their own. Vigilance is needed to keep the class together. Alertness and constant mobility. Terry can handle the strong demands on his energies, but there is no denying the increased strain of working with kids who are rebellious and distrusting, who don't go along easily with anything happening inside school walls. There is not the response that often can mean satisfaction (often deceptively) but only a tenuous sense of communicating with some kids some of the time.

A Dialogue

Jim Morrison, Duane Allman and Jimi Hendrix come to life and reveal some secrets.

Hendrix: I thought Woodstock was something, but this heaven is a gas.
Duane: Hey man, that expression

went out a century ago.
Morrison: Hendrix, what are you doing in heaven?
Hendrix: I got advanced.
Allman: You were down there for a while.
Hendrix: You got any stuff?
Allman: Don't even mention that word up here. The great one will send you down there again.
Hendrix: So let's do a gig.
Morrison: Who's gonna drum?
Allman: Who's gonna play organ?
Hendrix: What do you do in this sacred joint?
Allman: Meditate.
Hendrix: Whaaa!!
Allman: Heck ya, and commune with nature.
Hendrix: I'm leaving.
Allman: Don't burn your soul too much down there.

While the kids are doing their interviews, the cooperating teacher works at his desk seldom looking up. At several points when the noise or disruptions rise, he expresses disapproval in annoyed glances. A few verbal exchanges with students at the beginning of the class and the teacher's withdrawal as Terry begins, indicate he sees himself as a custodian.

In the ninth grade self-consciousness is strong, and the same assignment, the Interview, is difficult, particularly for the girls, to read out loud. Subjects for the boys often have to do with sports and imitating television or radio announcers or what the kids will be when they grow up:

Q. What do you want to be when you grow up?
A. Football player.
Q. Why?
A. I like football.
Q. Do you plan to get married?
A. No.
Q. Are you going to college?
A. Yes. Vermont State.
Q. What are your interests?
A. Football, basketball and eating.
Q. Are you into the government?
A. No!
Q. Who is your favorite football player?
A. Greg Landry and "Mean" Joe Greene.
Q. Are you satisfied with the present government?
A. No. I think we should mix up our government and the Communist government.

And ambivalences:

Cain, a quiet fellow.
Gorilla, speaks for himself.
Cain: Why are you so hostile? It is said that he who is hostile lives not a peaceful life.
Gorilla: Roar.
Cain: Do you not think that meat is harmful to the attitude of one?
Gorilla: ROAR.
Cain: How often do you meditate? For it is said that he who meditates daily will live a secure and fulfilled life.
Gorilla: ROAR
Cain: Chop Chop

For the girls, the interviews are more personal; they write about love, boyfriends, marriage and having babies. The teacher, a woman, and Terry are embarrassed and impatient. She accuses the girls of being silly and says, "If you have written something, read it, and loud enough for all of us to hear; I don't know why there should be giggles." From my observation, girls know their ideas often lack importance in the value system of our society, just as the boys know the importance placed on their choice of careers and sports activities--thus the reason for the girls' greater self-consciousness. Unfortunately, no one was questioning the pain (and shame) thrust on the young women by a sex role that denies their full person or, for the boys, the restriction to "masculine" options. A series of open-ended questions might be asked about what else kids want to do or be; what can they fantasize for themselves? can these fantasies become a reality? how? why or why not? Writing is a process of diving into who we are, and we don't get very far by accepting socially defined roles, categories, casts, labels--other peoples' visions of us rather than our own.

Generally, Terry encourages everyone to read but does not insist. If there is self-conscious laughter, he shows, by listening, that he takes pupils' words seriously. They pick up his attitude and begin to listen too. He does not make judging statements such as, "That's beautiful. That's nice. I like that." He reads with force and directness, respect, often asking who wrote the poem or he reads the name. He adds an affirmative smile or "Hmm" and goes on to the next. The absence of judging comments allows pupils' minds to roam freely and to criticize without shutting down in the presence of the poet's prejudgement. Terry seems to imply: "Take it as it is. What do you think? Listen, that's all, listen."

When asked to write a dream:

I am flying around on a field of embers,
waiting for my squirrel to come
out of
the garage and get his fuel changed
so I can
ride off on him to the Bahamas,
when I get
there I'm going to lie in the sun
and race
pollywogs, and then I'm going to
climb a palm
tree, and break coconuts with my
left ear,
then I'll take a walk on the
beach and pick
up pebbles with my nostril;
after that
I'm going to join an octopus for
a pizza, and
then I guess I'll wait around for
a St. Bernard
and swim all the way home!!

-- Carol, pupil

The last group for the morning is two combined classes of eighth-graders. Terry talks with them about the differences in composition. "In writing what you truly want to write your voice will come through." A student asks, "But if you don't like what we write how will you grade us?" Terry explains that writing is a matter of structure; there are different structures, different ways of saying something and not a right or wrong way. "We will make ditto copies of our poems, and at the end of May we'll have a poetry reading. You can read your own poems, the ones you like best." Asking the pupils how they feel about the assignments leads to a discussion about the different ways of looking outside ourselves, how this increases the understanding of our own feelings, and makes it possible for us to write a better shopping list, an essay or a poem.

A Basketball Is Like A Person's Head

a hamburger
a person's cheeks
the globe
a big baseball
a round hockey puck
a steering wheel
the letter o
a shot-put
eyeball
a big golf ball
a door knob
ball bearing
a bb
a billiard ball
an orange
a hub cap
a pond or pool
a rolled up poster

-- (no name), pupil

STUDENT TEACHERS

Student teacher journal, by Stephanie Wander, Freshwoman, University of Hartford: *When we walked into the classroom the eighth graders immediately took seats up front. They sat in mostly separate groups of boys and girls. After the teacher called the class to order, we told them about what they were going to write. Our topic was the Time Machine. We told them to put themselves in a time machine. They were to go in any direction of time. We suggested writing about a place they would like to go to--the perfect place.*

While they were working there was constant talking going on between the groups. They were very enthusiastic about writing and talking about the piece to their friends. We asked them to stop fifteen minutes before the period was over. A few of the pupils volunteered to read their own pieces. Many of the pupils traded with each other and read their friends' pieces. There was a constant demand for us to read our papers. One of us did, *but we were more interested in hearing what the class wrote.*

Most of the boys were very explicit with what happened while they were inside the time machine. Their place dealt mostly with wars and bombers. Not too many of the pupils wrote about a good place. When talking about the future there were many pessimistic views of what was in store for them. When writing about the past they usually dealt with changing the course of history.

When class was over they were very enthusiastic to leave. They handed in their papers, asked what happened to Terry and left. They were a very easy class to work with. Especially since they seem to enjoy writing.

A Review page by Debby Pinkiert, Freshwoman, University of Hartford: *On Thursday March 1, 1973, I went into Bloomfield Junior High School and taught an eighth grade English class. I was quite surprised at their creativity and interest in the topic that was chosen for them to write on. It was about a caveman coming to Bloomfield in 1973, what they would feel like and their reactions.*

Upon re-reading the pieces I found most of them to express a certain amount of discontent that the children feel about their surroundings. Discontent dealing with the so called "jet age", pollution, people and their behavior, etc. Some of the children had the cavemen waking from sleep or just walking in, but in each case their opening lines were "Ugh!"

From just this one experience, I saw so many things that I wasn't aware of at this age. They're so much more aware of their surroundings and so much more sophisticated than kids ten years ago. It was quite refreshing and invigorating to find this.

Belief, confidence, enjoyment and flexibility are qualities of a good learner and teacher. To help guide pupils, a sense of direction, not from a predetermined lesson plan but from live involvement, is essential. Student teachers, whether in their first or fourth year have an opportunity during the poetry program to re-examine educational concepts in textbooks and curriculums. The "Caveman" piece Debby speaks of lent itself to exaggeration and acting out reactions. Another exercise which brought out a sophisticated range of feelings was titled, "An Entry In My Journal, March 15, 1978." by Jennifer Stone:

What a day I had today. I'm not going to mention any names, just in case anyone gets ahold of this. I hate it when people laugh at a cause I believe in. During the past five years I've convinced many people about things I believe in to help this world, *but it makes me sick when people laugh. There are a few people who I've tried to convince for about five years, but they just think it's one big joke. They don't care what happens to the world they live in. It could rot and shrivel up for all they care.*

There is a saying that everyone is beautiful. I don't believe it anymore. Everybody is cruel, would be more accurate. Not saying that everyone is cruel; there are some really beautiful people in this crazy world of mixed up people, but much much more, people are cruel than beautiful. Whoever thought of that saying is really mixed up.

I went back to Union yesterday thinking of buying a house. Wow, it turned into another Bloomfield. What is the world coming to? That was the only place I ever believed in. I've been building up too many dreams for myself. I've got to stop it. If I don't stop, pretty soon I will be completely out of reality. What then? I'd probably be happier. Reality stinks.

I'm going to Colorado. I hear that's a beautiful place to live. Maybe I will try it. Another development is being put up-- I've got to get out of this place.

Upper level students from the university were, in Terry's words, "a little more teacherish in their approach to pupils than the first year students." He said, *Each time the seniors returned to the Creative Writing class, they would bitch and moan about how un-cooperative the junior high school pupils had been; how bored they were; how the assignments had failed; how the pupils were not motivated to do any personal writing. Then, they would read a few of the pieces the pupils had written, and in most cases, some pretty exciting stuff had been written. I had worked with the same class at the junior high school the first semester, and at times, felt the same reactions. I explained to the university students that this particular class at the junior high school needed strong direction. It was not the kind of class you could walk into and expect the kids to pick up a pencil and begin writing because they enjoyed it. It was a class of kids who saw themselves as "average"; who had a great feeling of inadequacy; who wanted to just get by. What we were asking from them was far more than this, and hence, perhaps we were creating even greater anxiety for them.*

The first half of the university class was spent discussing the situation at the junior high school. Terry says, *We tried to devise sets of exercises which could be modified if one of the exercises "failed", wasn't interesting to* *the pupils, or didn't seem expansive enough in its concept. We discussed essays on "open-field composition", poetry in the classroom, projects set up by Teachers and Writers Collaborative, apathy in the classroom, the necessity of being a teacher who writes as opposed to a writer who teaches, etc.*

The second half of the class was spent discussing the university student's writing. We worked on developing critical methods which could then be used in the junior high school classes. Hopefully if the university students' writing was evolving, the junior high school students' writing would also be evolving.

At the same time the university students were running their classes at the junior high school, Terry was running four classes of his own. *I would let the university students know what I was doing, what end I was striving for, and how successful particular assignments were. There was a great sharing of materials, possibilities. I suggested to the university students that in criticizing work we concentrate on the good elements in a piece of writing. In this way we would be giving positive reinforcement. I didn't suggest to the university students that we stick to just poetry. Instead we should concentrate on having the junior high school students simply make "pieces"; decide after the fact if a piece was actually a poem, or prose piece. I told the university students that we weren't creating "poets"; we were hopefully helping the pupils reckon with their own personal writing. Any kind of writing that they wanted to do on their own would be possible if we showed them how to "announce" themselves.*

From working with Terry students were willing to try an exercise they had made up, and if it didn't go as they expected they were able to adapt or analyze rather than consider it a failure.

An excerpt from university student Pamela Then's diary, March 8, 1973: *We asked the kids to write a story in response to the reading of their comic strip. Their story could either be the ending or the previous story leading up to the comic strip. They seemed restless, unattentive and uninterested, which was probably provoked by the rainy, dismal morning ... One boy said, "I read this comic this morning and I know the ending." -- very typical of the responses. These comics limited their creative powers because they thought there must be a definite way of responding. ... At the beginning of class there should be discussion rather than having us throw out an idea and have them work only from there. Mrs. Gaster (the cooperating teacher) suggested writing words on the* *board and have them make a story using words. This gives them direction, whereas the comic did not.*

Another university student, Madeline Russo, writes: *We brought in a record, Rachmaninoff's "Isle of the Dead" and thought we would make it more interesting by asking them to write their own epitaphs while listening to the music.*

We presented the assignment but did not get much discussion so we attempted to try it. After about ten or fifteen minutes we realized the whole class could not or would not get involved. After collecting and reading some of the papers the pupils told us that the subject was too dismal and only a handful of kids responded to it.

Discarding the music and previous assignment we laid the groundwork for the next. "Zap" -- you are invisible -- what would you do? This seemed to arouse more attention and the class wrote some really imaginative, and quite funny experiences. We read these aloud as well and the group was much more alive and involved now but unfortunately time ran out.

I feel we cut them short by not having the time at the end to talk about each paper; but it was better than continuing with an assignment that fell flat.

I would suggest for the next two people who go into the class that a music inspiration idea is good but perhaps with different kinds: rock, folk or light classical. They could write about the moods they feel with the music. One hint, if they are not interested, have something else in mind to try. We don't want to waste their time but help to bring out their own creative potential.

Susan Fierman speaks in her paper about the trouble pupils had with her exercise, "Animals Moving To Music," relating images of the animals to the sounds in the music. *At times I tried to demonstrate the movements of certain animals, but I think this confused them more. A few of their papers were really good. Some of them wrote stories using the music to guide the type of action involved.*

When a pupil had difficulty, I tried to start him writing by asking him what animal he liked to look at. I had him describe its motions and then asked him to see if he could relate it to the music. Some of the students came up with good descriptions even if their work was not directly related to the music.

It was during their second semester that university students went into the classrooms in Bloomfield on their own (as opposed to the team-teaching approach of the first semester). They would return to the university class immediately thereafter and relate the day's events. Students found, says Terry, "that by working at the junior high school in small groups the pupils got involved and were more responsive than in the large classes. In many cases, the university students found that the junior high school pupils were able to utilize the assignment better than the student teachers had in their writing. Very little theory was introduced into the classroom at the junior high level; the assignments themselves were the theory." This became known as an evolving curriculum, developed out of the assignments. And a variation of it: junior high pupils gave assignments to student teachers, who did the assignments and came back and gave the same assignment to the pupils.

As a senior majoring in education, Madeline Russo took the Creative Writing course because this had always been an interest of hers. But visiting the junior high school was the bonus for the course.

When I registered for this class I was not aware that we would be teaching also. Listening to what members of the class have done and researching ideas myself to use, have broadened my repertoire of writing activities. We have gotten into some really interesting discussions concerning our function and the impact on the class itself. We have pooled ideas, shared frustrations and learned. A person does not even have to be interested in teaching and still hit on assignments that will get the kids excited.

I consider this course to be a workshop where we have shared our interests, our thoughts, our feelings and our talents. Input equals output here, for it calls for participation through written or verbal expression. One could learn from sitting back and listening but when each person has so much to offer, I feel, it is essential to be involved.

He comes home to tea,
beating thresholds.
Hands on lead.
Doors that give
under blows of bombs.
Life's half brother
makes house calls,
passes out lollipops
to lemmings awaiting
the elicit entertainment, only
six feet of earth can afford.

-- Ira Greenbaum, university student

"This poem explains one of my views of death," says Ira. Poetry, at one point in his life was "a literary form used only by young women and senile men. My masculinity could not sanction it." Ira, a freshman, has changed his mind. When speaking about the development of his own writing Ira says, "I give an infinite amount of gratitude to my English professor, one Terry Stokes, and say that the remainder of the change came from reading other, mostly contemporary, poets."

Julie Schecter, in the same class with Ira, was helped by an assignment in which she had to write in the style of five poets.

"When writing in someone else's style," she says, "you learn different approaches to poetry. I wrote in the styles of Ginsberg, Roethke, Wright, Hughs and Taylor and came to understand their techniques." Julie went to the poetry readings held at the University of Hartford: "These affected me strongly; I became more aware of myself and my desire to write, to use all of my images as openly as possible."

EVALUATION RESPONSES

Lee Yosha, chairman of the English department at the University of Hartford, is pleased with the program. It has proved itself as an effective alternative to traditional education methods. He is especially interested in continuing the course for freshwomen and freshmen. "Their enthusiasm in that first experience in the classroom is important." For those who continue in education, it acts as a balance to standard courses and the preconceptions that develop when abstractions are learned before a student gets into the classroom.

To ensure the future of the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program, Lee Yosha suggests an in-service writing workshop for teachers. Terry agrees. He feels it is essential to have the support of the cooperating teachers. Their acceptance of the poet and their active interest in the writing projects make for a livelier class where pupils feel they can let their imaginations go.

Commenting further on the reaction of the teachers at the junior high school, to the program, Terry said: *There wasn't the terrific enthusiasm we all felt from the teachers last year at Bloomfield High School. The range of emotions of the teachers seemed to be: amusement, amazement, indifference, acceptance. Some of them did use some of our assignments, so we did reach them in some way. It seems to me that there is such an emphasis on skills at this level of education that the introduction of a creative approach to composition is very difficult for a junior high school to accomodate. This is a problem, which I'm not sure how to solve. Some of the pupils felt that if they weren't being graded for the work, there wasn't any point in doing it. Some of the teachers wanted only to be observers, not active participants in the assignments. I wouldn't force students or pupils to write if they refused to do an assignment, and therefore, I couldn't ask the teachers to write if they didn't want to.*

And, about pupils' reactions, Terry continued: *I'm not quite sure how the junior high school kids reacted to having different students come into the classroom each week. The only stable factor in the classroom was the progression of assignments. I think the sense* *of intimacy the pupils wanted to feel with the "teachers" was absent. I'm not sure how to rectify this situation. I found that some of the classes at the junior high school were a little angry that I wasn't in the classroom the second semester. I think this problem is inter-related to the previous one, in that I had been a stable factor in the classroom; someone who was "always there".*

TERRY'S TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Terry Stokes had taught for three years at Western Michigan University when he was offered the visiting artists job at the University of Hartford and Bloomfield. On a leave of absence in order to do some writing, he was not enthused by the prospect of another teaching job. For him, the schism in his role as teacher-writer had been intensified. "The tools I used in the classroom were 'teacher' tools; the tools I used in my study were 'writer' tools." But Terry took the visiting artists job which began as a ten-day workshop. Three and a half years later Terry writes: "I think we all discovered that each piece of writing had its own form. To compare that individual 'piece' to a 'well-made' poem or a 'well-made' piece of prose with the same concerns was unfair. Each new 'piece' became its own model with its own terms." He saw that the writing-teaching role could be unified. "If I moved into the situation of the student writing a 'piece', I was actually writing the 'piece' myself, the writer-teacher became one person. We don't need 'professionals' in the classroom. What you do need is teachers who 'write' themselves; teachers who go through the experience of getting themselves on a piece of paper." How language is always making new language is exciting to Terry. He talks about a poem and anything a student says in it with tact and honesty, always probing for responses, questioning reactions. This is where personality and methods merge. The student teachers' attitudes are affected; and changed attitudes mean changed methods. Mary Calvert, senior in the Creative Writing course: *When Terry first asked us to write a reaction to the course, how our writing had changed, etc., I told him that what had happened was, my writing had fallen apart.*

He groaned and said, "Another success story!" and everyone laughed.

But sometimes, your writing has to fall apart, for you to put it back together again in a new way. I've written one poem this semester that worked. I've written all sorts of things that didn't work. I've written all sorts of things that rambled around and fell apart all by themselves. I've written all sorts of things I didn't want to read in class, because I was afraid they weren't any good, or no one would like them, or whatever. I've chased elusive sounds, moods, feelings, *people, happenings and non-happenings.*

What has happened is that this is the first unstructured course I've ever had in my life, and I've learned how much I've been dependent upon structure. Take it away and I flounder. Did you ever try to flounder gracefully?

I've learned that the reason I write such good term papers is because I like being a pompous ass, making all the judgements for the reader. I've learned that I don't like to share my failures. I've learned that I worry too much about someone's approval. Anyone's approval. We have one more class session and I'm just beginning to understand what it's all about. My son came home the other day from a visit on a farm, with a pair of cheap hand-me-down red flannel pajamas. There's a poem in those pajamas, if I can only wring it out.

But the story of the course is Terry. Because he has a Ph.d. and no one ever even considered calling him "Dr. Stokes." Because you can say anything to him. Because you can write anything for him. Because he knows more about language than anyone I've ever known. My ambition in life is to be able to understand everything Terry says. Ultimately we do not teach with techniques or textbooks or curriculum guides or methods or learning theories. We teach with our perception of the world, by sharing it with other human beings. Terry is a poet. He hears voices and sees visions and dreams dreams. And then, so do we.

Terry's sixth book of poetry, Crimes of Passion, was published this year by Alfred A. Knopf. Natural Disasters, New York University Press, was published in 1971 and A Season of Lost Voices in 1972. Terry writes reviews and short stories, and his poems have appeared in over eighty magazines and several anthologies.

Things To Do In The Country

Watch the light from the house
behind this house
crawl into the stream.

Look up the movies in the Sunday Times
soon to come or now playing in your
neighborhood theaters.

Read a book about the internal
combustion engine
and its relationship to the heart,
ground fog, and antiquated gold stars.

Play chess with my brother, let him
have the queen early in some folly,
my pawns brooding for the rest of
the night.

Check all the compound words in the
dictionary thinking of them
lying on the couch which turns
into our bed in your apartment.
This is before the bulldozers come,
& the weather light on the MONY
building is steady yellow.
You know what that means.

Pat the cheeks of my three-year-old
niece,
let her know I love her
and will go anywhere she wishes, if
she will stop jumping
up & down on my pulse,
and lying to me
about her needs.

Write a contract offering your mother
for the squaw in you,
10 horses, three hands high, each.
All of them smile, & are never
very hungry, & they have teeth like
icebergs
at sunset.

Right now I'm mixing a drink
that would have killed Socrates,
& I guess I'll give you a call in
a few minutes,
just to see what you're doing.

(Originally published in The Carleton
Miscellany; included in CRIMES OF
PASSION, Alfred A. Knopf, New York,
1973. Copyright 1973, Terry Stokes)

ANNHURST COLLEGE
SOUTH WOODSTOCK, CONNECTICUT

Annhurst is a 32 year-old Catholic women's college which opened its doors to male students in 1972. Located in an isolated, rural part of Connecticut near the small community of Woodstock, the campus is the center of many activities in the region.

For two months poet Leo Connellan taught a faculty class and a creative writing course for students who had completed their student teaching the previous fall. Like Eastern, the Annhurst poetry program began in the spring, so it did not include poet and students going together into the high schools.

Also, on Wednesday evenings for six sessions, Leo held a creative writing workshop open to the surrounding community. Annhurst is encouraging the use of its resources to bring the college and community together for increased growth in learning and the arts. A recently completed arts building has a large and small theater; sculpture, painting and pottery rooms complete with easels, wheels, kilns; and music studios installed with extensive new sound equipment. Academic Dean, Sister Helen Bonin, in Leo's words, "has been both kind and exceptional in allowing a complete freedom to accomplish our intent without interference and, rather, with all the help she could provide."

Obviously Leo felt this was a comfortable place to work, and he responded by giving extra time and energy to the poetry program. He spent an additional day on campus each week to be available for conferences, and he welcomed students for coffee at the beginning and end of the day for discussions about their writing or poetry. Leo has plenty of writing know-how to share, as evidenced in his two books: Pleasure Through Poetry and Poetic Thoughts. Three books of his poems merited awards and grants. His latest work-in-progress is tentatively titled, Crossing America. Leo lives with his wife and daughter in Clinton, Connecticut. He has received literature grants from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts as well as from the National Endowment for the Arts. While at Annhurst Leo read his own poetry and arranged for three poets, Constance Carrier, William Packard and James Lewisohn to give public readings at the college.

This is consistent with Leo's philosophy that to identify with established writers is important for people who are learning to write. "This gives you encouragement, tells you the 'someone out there' who seems remote and exceptional has experienced much of what you experience. The feelings are in all of us, and the only difference is, the writer is able to write them." Edna Freeman knew what Leo's words meant. She was a participant in the evening community workshop for beginners in writing. She said Leo cleared the air the first night by telling his personal experience of how long it took him to write his first poems and how difficult it was. "I had thought it was only me," Edna said, "but I wasn't afraid to keep trying after that." She was encouraged to write more personally about her life:

Her Day

She sat among her children and the
families they had.

The gathering was chosen in her honor.

No one addressed her directly, no
one sought her opinion--not even
on the weather.

Wordlessly, a paper plate containing
small portions of festive foods
was placed within her reach as
stern voice admonished that she
not spill.

Once I saw her fumbling, torte
fell upon the colored patio floor.

I would not have her know I was
witness to the choked back tears,
the white head held erect, the
cutting rebuke for awkwardness and
uncertainty.

So she sat.

Unheard, almost unseen, on this day
her children set aside each year to
do her honor.

-- Edna Freeman

Out of the weekly two-hour workshops came poems, fiction, essays and memoirs. Sister Rita Louise composed lyrics and music for her guitar, which she shared by performing in class. Of the ten women and two men attending the sessions only a few had tried to write. One woman who signed her papers, V.P., wrote a personal essay titled, "Self-Discovery." It is about what kept her from writing for twenty years and the struggles toward awareness, confidence and understanding which became clear to her because of the workshop. *I realize now after listening to Mr. Connellan's lecture, one point made a vivid impact, and it was: "If you get in your own way, you cannot produce." I strongly suspect that's what happened to me when I was a teen-ager. Somehow I feel I had latent tendencies to aspiring authorship. But it was smothered and crippled. It's unkind to blame my father (now deceased) but I strongly believe he was the one that stifled my desire for creativity. He was a stern and dictatorial parent. I remember more discipline than encouragement. More ridicule than tolerance, and more impatience than consideration.* She goes on to write about a hard life with parents who came from Finland and how her attitudes and beliefs were molded by her family and twelve years of public school education. For the first time, in Leo Connellan's evening workshop, she felt the encouragement and confidence to write. "Suddenly I do not feel as threatened or insecure as I have in the past thirty years." And she is now writing her family memoir.

Leo did not insist people write in only one form for an assignment. If prose, essay, story, criticism came easier than a poem, that is what people should write. To give a better sense of an assignment Leo often told a story about himself. When working on the problem of association and identification in writing he described the time in his childhood of his mother's death and the housekeeper who beat him. A young woman in the class, Gretchen Henerlan, "who had never," according to Leo, "been able to get a line down on paper," wrote:

Shawn

soft brown deer-eyes gazing up at me
unflinching at my threat,
  wondering--
little boy,
tiny four-year-old elf
curious, destructive, in such
  need of attention,
eager to help yet unashamed to
  confess your worst deeds,
staring up at me with those unafraid
  eyes
I grow impatient, you disobey
and still your eyes look up at me
free of guilt
challenging my authority, threatening me,
so I slap you,
and finally you turn away softly
crying.

Oh little boy, what have I done?
My position is affirmed, but our
human bond is weakened
  and you are hurt
and I hurt all the more, now
realizing
that my needless abuse could
scar you for life.

Your eyes,
so innocent,
couldn't I see?
It was only love you were asking.

-- Gretchen Henerlan

Leo had a particular talent for reaching people who considered themselves unable to go beyond the ruts and routines of their lives, people who had settled into the acceptance of self-failure. He drummed over and over, "the right to fail in writing allows you to try for something more." Was it the acceptance (and self-acceptance) that allowed people in the evening community workshop to look at their lives in a new way? Everyone agreed, through varied forms of writing, what had been only a vague dream of impossible value to themselves or others, now they could do; the dream had become a reality.

In connection with the classes at Annhurst College for faculty and student teachers, Leo wrote at length in his report about the creative process and the teacher's role with pupils. "Many people feel that writing cannot be taught and that a human being is either gifted or he isn't; and all that can be done in trying to teach creative writing, the creative process, is to go back to what we know has been created and show this to our students.

But I believe in the creative person working with a teacher so that together we can help develop our capacities to create. The most important single accomplishment of this course is that we all arrive at how to get through to all children. The next most important thing to get through to each and every child is that they must never be personally mortified or in any way afraid of failing. Our objective is to show the child how to come out of himself, be himself. Then we can realize that we can make poetry, whether the poem is a piece of pottery our hands are shaping, or a poem of words we can bring out of ourselves into a real form. An example of this is the following anagram written by a pupil in Leo's class while he was teaching in a poetry program in Maine. "She was a 17-year-old senior," said Leo, "who hadn't written since the fourth grade." The word chosen: MOOSELOOKMEGUNTIC". Found 75 words, used 30.

He comes soon, to the water.
There. He looms, a lonesome shadow
Under the tin moon. The gem-like stars
Are beyond his ken, but he looks
And sees them. He sees much from this site:
The guile of the coon that
Licks his hands as if to clean his soul.
The men, with their guns and smoke and ropes
Trying to lock up the land.
The sun as it rises and sets,
Adding pages to the tome of time.

The moose moves from the slick
Cool water that tugs at his legs.
He looks back--at the moon, the stars,
The signs of men, the raccoon.
They are all beyond his ken,
But they are still his kin.
As if on cue, the moose unties
The spell and melts
Into the trees.

-- Kim Ward, pupil
Yarmouth High School,
Yarmouth, Maine

Leo goes on to say, *Children must have complete trust in the teacher. We are never interested in one child, but in the possibilities in all children. No one is on any talent scout hunt here for certain favorites who show promise. We want children to have more freedom than ever to explode in their abilities, but our concentration is on everyone, the shy and the disinterested child who has never been loved enough to be shown how* *lovely and beautiful he is and how much creativity is in him. For too long a time children have been turned away from developing their own creative capacities, largely from fear of failure. I hope to convince teachers to convince students that there is nothing wrong with failing, that there is so much to be learned even in the attempt to write.*

Looking ahead specifically to courses for teachers Leo said, *I would have the teachers implement various exercises designed to free the student of self-consciousness and fear of failure. Of course, I can't emphasize enough the fact that the teachers must first believe in these exercises and what we are all trying to do, before they can direct them. Therefore, much time would be spent examining and trying out the exercises in groups and in individual counseling. Many teachers are unaware of the possibilities such exercises can develop. In a sense, all the teacher has to bring to the program course is open mindedness, cooperation and a willingness to experiment with new approaches.*

From his daily report of classes we can see how assignments attempted to translate basic ideas into practice. "February 27, 1973. Each of us look into ourselves and find something that has disturbed us, moved us, but we haven't tried to write it down before:"

Pandora

Be brave
Do you fear what might come
from within
Does it pain you to think
No! Keep the cover locked
Do not yearn to view the THINGS
Go to the zoo
Laugh at the caged-in animals
What harm can they do?

-- (no name), student teacher

"March 6. Go to the student cafeteria. Look and write about this every-day place we know, and realize how much we miss of what we look at every day."

Criss-crossed trays crowd the sturdy
shelf.
Steam-bathed scholars, in clinging
jeans, sweat and shout the washroom
choreography;
toss greasy silver and coffee-stained
cups;
deftly stack sticky plates for
Operation Clean.
"You going out tonight?" "Hey, quit
that horsing around!"
all the while filling the gaping
buckets hungrily awaiting their share
of today's menu:
crusts of enriched bread (builds
bodies in twelve different ways!)
daintily set aside by delicate
appetites;
half-nibbled apples, pride of last
fall's countryside;

untouched dessert a diet-stricken
conscience changed its mind about;
chicken legs spurned by disdainful
lips--
too bland or spiced for their
sophisticated taste:
carrots quite beneath their dignity
and lettuce gouged out of BLT's...

The stoop-shouldered bracero lifts
his weary back, mops his brow,
and bends again: "The kids need
shoes so bad..."
A haggard young woman of Calcutta
gazes at her son's bloated stomach
and emaciated limbs and weeps
despairingly.
The small Vietnamese child scrapes
his rice bowl;
passes thin fingers inside to catch
that last precious drop.

-- Sister Cecil Forest

"March 29. Our tri-dimensional selves and more. We are always the person we really are, then we are the person we show to the world or pretend to be, and we are the fantasy person we wish we were. Write about this fantasy person."

Translucent
rainbow-dotted
bubbles
still dripping soapy strings

Delicious
cotton candy
that smears
both cheek and tangled hair

A morning bud plucked in its
dewdrops
Leaving the stalk and the leaves
behind.

How can they say that life begins
at forty
When long before
Bubbles have burst and
Candy has melted and
Blossoms have wilted and died.

Unless life be, as for the two-year-
old
A whirl of perennial awe.

-- Sister Blanche

"March 13. Take an experience we saw in childhood and now seeing a similar experience, how do we relate the two? A collating theme."

Sea-scape

when i was six, i remember
wading in warm, shallow pools
trapped high on the beach:

once, seeing a crab
sidewishing from a tipped stone
watching over his shoulder,
hurrying into a narrow cave
between my feet.

and wondering why it made me think
of how i felt the first time
i told a lie.

-- Sister Helena Brand

For the teachers, the students at Annhurst College and for the adults who came to the evening workshop perhaps the rebirth of the child was the beginning of a natural but long lost creative impulse Leo knew could be expressed.

Sister Helen Bonin might agree. "Our students and faculty felt the program was eminently worthwhile as Mr. Connellan demonstrated writing techniques and methods of teaching writing to students and adults. Moreover, he inspired his students to do some fine writing."

Although in his own poetry, Leo Connellan writes from the darker side of life (or because of this), he was able to help people he taught to acknowledge their pain, their darker side. If this meant facing shame, anger, guilt, fear and loneliness, once touched upon, it might also open the way toward other perceptions of life.

Watching Jim Shoulders

When did my manhood wake to its
dying!
Never in New England or in Elko,
Nevada, inside
screen doors with legal girls,
dulled by fifty cent splits.
But in Colorado's air and snow
like first communion lace on
blunt mountains. He was Mantle
on horse back, the
same class, and as injured, out of
that remote private
America of ranges, ranches, vast
wide open space where
sophistication is silence.
Truth is your action shot
from corrals, lasso wrist flicked
instantly with
eight seconds to rope and tie or
lose. Shoulders,
scraping the cheeks of steers
along earth cut by
grooves of his boot heels, while
those horns that could
cave in ribs, turned until the
folds in the animal's
neck looked like it's spine would
split through skin,
yet didn't in this master's hands.

Leo Connellan

From "Knapsack and Stars"
Appeared in The Nation, 1970.

Frances Kornbluth, because of the creative writing class at Annhurst, has changed. She is passing on these changes to others. *I have resumed writing poetry and also overcome the block I felt toward written communication. What has been a tedious and often overwhelming challenge now is miraculously replaced by a sense of flow.*

My work as teacher of the program for gifted children in our community has been greatly enhanced and twenty-nine youngsters now share added dividends in their creative writing and appreciation.

EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE
WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT

"Any work of art which is not a beginning, a discovery, is of little worth. Each poem must be a new and strange adventure if it is worth recording at all." -- James Humphrey, poet.

And literally, recording is the method Jim uses for picking up immediate sounds, sensations and awarenesses to expand and translate images into words. In his first poetry workshop for student teachers at Eastern Connecticut State College, in Willimantic, he played audiotape collages, sound effects mixed with music and voices. "I've found that pupils like the collages best if they are from five to twelve minutes in length. I play the tapes over and over until the kids are through writing. It's a good idea not to ask them to write about something specific. Tell them to let their imaginations go and write about whatever they get from the collage." Jim makes a lot of his own tapes and says they are not difficult to do. He suggests simple equipment, and borrowing it if you have to. A reel to reel recorder is best for workshops because the volume is good, and he adds, "I don't hesitate to turn it up loud." One tape took him 12 hours to make. There are sounds of air going out of an inner tube, soldiers marching and counting cadence, rock and folk music, a clock ticking, a stock car race, Big Ben bonging, a power saw, someone talking about social security, a train roaring down the tracks, a rocket blasting off, a submarine beneath the ocean, children playing.

The student teachers at Eastern were English majors who would be teaching at the secondary level. Few of them had read poetry or thought about writing in ways different from what they felt was required by institutional assignments. Each tape Jim played was followed by reading poems former pupils had written in response. Jim believes we need to get into the activity of an experience rather than passively writing about an idea. For him, anyone taking their first step into the wilderness of creativity, whether pupil or prospective teacher, needs to open the senses.

Listening to A Tape of Many Sounds

I feel like I'm falling through the
Streams of generations and time
I feel the agony of war
The enjoyment of Peace
And the happiness of love
I feel the world good and bad,
go by.

-- Dan Banks, pupil 8th grade

Thoughts

The wind blows.
The waves splash upon
the rocks. Cry of

sea gulls is heard.

The ocean roars. The
water runs up upon
the beach and wets the
sifted sand.

You sure can think about
alot during a math class.

-- Mitchell Karas, pupil
7th grade

Untitled

In the Industrial Madness
people try to take the lead,
But for what?
Through the stereo-typed crowds
the writer writes along
and the singer sings his song.
The words are really sounds
building higher & higher
shooting rockets to the moon.

It's All I can do to keep ahold on
myself
or I'll drown in the population
But how can people sit and do nothing
while others go off to kill?
Politicians running around promising
this
But giving only more problems.

I wish I could escape
this Flash Gordon Fantasy World
and go some place where I could be
myself.

A computer can take my place.
In fact I'd be glad.
and live away from this place.

I've just gotta get away.
I need a change
from this world where
religion has to go.

People should believe in beauty
Not God or after life.
They should be alive now
in this world.

But how could someone look forward
to such nobility?
Maybe I should look for a world
inside
this world
where we could live in peace.
I've just got to get away
I just can't stand it
the stress
  the monotony

If I don't escape
I'll be dead soon,
just me and some friends,
a few cats and dogs
  and my guitar

Yes, most of all, my guitar
where I can express my mood,
let my feelings come through.

How can I explain
I don't know where to go?
But I'll find it
and when I find it
I'll find myself

-- Ron Boretti, pupil
8th grade

Because of the amount of time kids spend in front of television sets Jim wants them to know more about what they see. Again, not give into the passivity television engenders but react, listen, be critical: how is this affecting me? Jim taped a solid 30 minutes of TV commercials. The following are poems written by pupils after he played the tape in a class.

My TV Says

This is best this is bester.
This is great this is greater.

How are we the people to know
this is white this is whiter.

This is longer this is longest
This is better this is betterer

This is getting silly

I like this but this is better
He may say it's good

But is it really?

-- Jeanne Lynch, pupil

Buy Buy Buy

Buy, Buy, Buy,
that's all the commercials
are, they are greedy and
all want their products
to be used. But did they
ever think if we want
their products we would go to
the store and buy them?

-- Elizabeth Maunsell, pupil

While working in the program at Eastern, Jim Humphrey was also poet-in-residence at the Grafton Elementary School, Grafton, Massachusetts, teaching fifth graders to write poetry. Last year he taught at the South Braintree, Massachusetts Junior High School and was, in the 1972-73 fall and winter semesters, poet-in-residence at Kennebunk, a Maine high school. After eight years of teaching Jim thinks it's important for student teachers to know how a pupil feels when he or she is asked to write a poem. He says, "They're scared, they can't think of anything, they say they can't do it."

Jim had given ditto sheets to the student teachers in which he briefly summarized his convictions about poetry. "The writing of a poem is making the words do what you want them to, not the words dictating to you. Listen to yourself first, what your emotions are saying. Go from there into your head where words are put together from your emotions." And he told them: "Don't generalize or stumble into vague, cliche language through a failure to be specific; the reader wants your poem to be personal, wants it to be something only you could write." He then put on the chalk board and asked student teachers to write it down: *When one of my students shows me his poems, I don't look for something that shares my situation of experience or my own commitment to the terms of what they have written. Each student is different from me, and I have no right to expect him to share my attitudes, opinions, experiences, etc. in his living and writing. I am teaching to help him in some possibility, some way. I am not teaching to make him like me, or a shadow of myself.*

Black Is Beautiful

I'm sorry darlin'
but we can't have
that house. We are
black. I love you
though, honey.

That pale motha'
Who the hell is
he? I'm really really
sorry darlin' but
we are black!

-- Don Macrino, student teacher

Basically Jim is not a man to talk theory in class; he wanted to get started moving, writing. The day I visited Eastern he did an exercise from photographs cut out of magazines. These he placed around the room on desk tops and windowsills. "Get up and walk around. Look at all of the pictures, pick one you like and go sit down and write about it." After about ten minutes Jim asked the student teachers how they were doing. They wanted more time. "This is too hard, I can't think of anything to write, what I wrote sounds corny," were a few of the comments. When fifteen minutes of class time was left Jim asked for volunteers to read their poems. No response. "I don't force kids to read," and he suggested they bring their poems up and leave them face down with the picture on his desk. "Someone come up and pick one at random to read." Richard Place, Arts Commission consultant, was visiting the class, volunteered. There was a definite warming up to the idea as students came to the front of the room. Soon they were eager to join in, listen and make comments. Hearing someone else read poems we have written helps us to take what we say more seriously or critically. One student said, "I really liked the way Ann read my poem; I never could have read it."

Portrait

Dust on a splintered wooden post,
Time with an angry face,
The green-fresh voices
Break the calm, cool air.
Nothing left but brittle pages
And a papery brown bag
Sliding into shadows of tired
Wrinkled streaked eyes.
And dimming light.
A crusted tear dries on weathered skin

As bit of earth beat on sagging
shoulders.

-- Lyn Gillespi, student teacher

Scene

Dirty table tops marked
with sticky rings
put there by the 12 to 1
lunch slobs,
My hand reaches across the
table for love
but all it gets is soggy
sugar grains... There's
a cold breeze that comes
through the door...marble
is cold...formica is
cold...I am cold...

-- C. Schoembs, student teacher

A discussion followed about working with pupils. Student teachers wanted to know how to give enough individual attention in creative writing to thirty students. I suggested pupils make two or three groups. The teacher can sit in with each group, taking part in their exercise, and later they all come together as a whole class to read their poems. I've tried this, and kids like the combination of independence and sharing. To questions about spelling and punctuation Jim answered, "In helping students to write poetry, the spelling and punctuation is secondary, and the teacher of poetry-writing workshops should be aware of this and impress it on their students. The important thing is to get on paper whatever it is you want to say. Don't stop tne flow of energy and intensity to spell or punctuate."

In private sessions in his apartment, Jim and the student teachers met in groups of four to six for wine and talk. Only three of the people had written poetry before. One was Joann Castagna.

why don't they throw their hate
on me
they leave it about
lying in red and grey clumps on
the floor
filling up the hallway
clogging the drains
i can't avoid this left-behind hate
can't cut it up, can't sweep it away
why don't they throw it at me
let me catch it, let it wrap
'round my body
if i caught it, i could break it
in my hands
if it touched my body my warmth
would melt it
but it lies about, dead and decaying
tries to trip me when i walk around it
tries to choke me, falling from
the ceiling
tries to kill me
this hate that they deny.

-- Joann Castagna, student teacher

Jim said about these meetings; "All of us were able, in these small sessions, to discuss in detail further possibilities for encouraging and stimulating students to write." Jim described experiences that had worked for him. In a New York City school this meant bringing baskets of fruit to the workshops along with large sheets of art paper and asking the students to write poems with the fruit. *It's great fun, and whatever happens, happens. Some students will smear the fruit on the paper. It becomes a visual poem. Another approach with the fruit is to slice it in the workshop and pass it among the students. Ask them to smell it before they eat it and then ask them to write about the smells of the fruit.*

It's fun to write a poem from a poem title taken from volumes of poetry by professional poets. The more unusual the poem title the more freedom the student has to do whatever. Each student should have a different title. Contemporary poem titles are usually best for this.

Fire drill poems. Shoot one word out verbally to the whole workshop--as an illustration, the word knife. Then tell them to write on a piece of paper all the words--single words, that knife brings to mind. If the students are in high school give them 30 seconds to do this, junior high, a minute, elementary students, 2 to 3 minutes. When they've done this ask them to write a poem incorporating all the words they've written down. Set a time limit on this too. Five minutes for high school students is long enough, more time for junior high and elementary students. This is a disciplinary exercise, so be sure you don't allow the students to write beyond the time limits you set up. If some of the students haven't completed their poems have them stop writing. They'll get it after a few tries. As always, ask the students to read their poems, have them pile the poems on a table and whoever wants to read can read as long as they don't give the writer's name.

A record like "Songs of the Humpback Whale" is good for workshop use. Don't identify it before you play it or while it's playing.

Have the students all close their eyes, and say, "You have just been struck blind. Where am I? Can I get out of this room? out of this building? Then what will I do with my life? Who will take care of me? What career will I follow?" Then say, "So many ugly distractions are gone, so many ugly things and people I won't have to look at, now I can develop my inner life, balance the life of memory with the life of the imagination." And from here ask the students to write a poem. This exercise was thought up by the poet, Paul Metcalf.

The next logical step from talking about exercises was to make the resources that might be needed. *Armed with a cassette tape recorder I took some of the English majors downtown and recorded whatever, cars going by, honking, people talking, cash registers clinging, coffee being* *poured, popcorn popping, bowling balls knocking pins over, the clicking of pool balls, noise from a stamp machine, cigarette machine. In other words, whatever was available. Stopped by a TV store and recorded a couple of minutes from a soap opera. Came back to the apartment and put what we had done on a reel-to-reel tape recorder, mixing it up and putting music in from the radio now and then. The students dug it, and said they couldn't wait to make one of their own.*

Jim asked volunteers to prepare exercises which they would use to conduct the last workshop. John Muzljakovich and Don Macrino taped four contrasting songs. The students (poet included) were asked to write whatever the music made them feel and not to strive for a complete poem, but to get feelings on the paper. George Lanoue and Stephen Dunn led blindfolded students through a maze, one at a time, to touch leaves, granite block, branches, tin can with dents, stone, nickel, chestnut, furry boot, a blanket. When the blindfolds were taken off each person wrote poems about what the unknown things felt like or the feelings they stimulated.

Two weeks before Jim arrived at Eastern, all the students in Education 466 were asked by their instructor to write about how they would conduct a poetry or writing workshop. Now they have done it.

Jim's last night on campus the students surprised him with a party, "The best party I've been to in my life," Jim said.

In state teacher training schools (Southern, Central, Eastern) the problems with the Poets-in-the-Colleges Program aims and objectives are more extreme than in liberal arts colleges (University of Hartford, University of Bridgeport). Eastern was no exception. Schedule changes were made after the program started, for no apparent reason except that once the program began, and the presence of the poet was a reality, his methods and techniques were unwelcome. Philomene Ducas, cooperating methods teacher, felt the poetry workshop intruded on class time needed for more important work. She wanted to know about the quality of poems, and the critical standards one can set for measuring the value of a poem. James Lacey, Head of the English Department at Eastern, said Jim was successful in showing student teachers how to get young people to write imaginatively in a relaxed, open situation. But Lacey's more conservative views and the traditional concerns, structures and expectations of the English Department contrasted sharply with Jim's point of view. During the brief two-week period resentments were not resolved; but Jim feels he put aside resistance to his presence and was able to work well with the student teachers, even in these difficult surroundings.

Poem Written With My Son's Pen

The rain coming down
as always in the Spring

but here now, me,
alive, April 1st, 1973

Norma, Saroyan, myself,
planting flowers

this afternoon
in the rain

soaking wet, laughing
throwing mud at each other.

The toughest winter
of my life

behind me.

No planned rejoicing,
but here now,

rejoicing, if
for no other reason,

rejoicing our being together.

Somewhere it's as windy day.
Kids are flying kites.

Farmers are in the fields
planting seeds, their wives,

their eldest children,
doing chores wherever

they should be done.

Their small children,
surrounded by hens,
feeding them, listening
to the sheds creak.

Somewhere, right now,
a Poet, reading his Poems

-- James Humphrey
Attleboro, Massachusetts

Jim Humphrey's first collection of poetry, Argument For Love (Kendall, from The Sumac Press) was published in 1970, followed by two chapbooks, The Visitor (Hovey Street Press) and An Homage: The End Of Some More Land (The Job Shop Press) in 1972. He won the Authors League Award in 1972 and the P.E.N. American Center Award for 1972 and 1973.

Jim, Norma and their son, Saroyan, live in Massachusetts in the country in a renovated railroad station where eleven trains a day pass by. How Jim's life is his poems was commented on by the writer, William Saroyan: "I think Humphrey's stuff is getting it, getting the idea, getting to the idea -- that living is the first poem, and getting that understood in simple true words is the second."

MEMORIAL BOULEVARD SCHOOL
BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

A 70 year-old poet bridges the generation gap. Leonard Halpin, who lives in Wethersfield, Connecticut, spent eight weeks in the Bristol school with seventh and eighth graders in English, music and art classes. Memorial Boulevard school is in the economically-depressed city of Bristol, southwest of Hartford. Although the city is growing in both population and industrial development, it still had one of the highest rates of unemployment in Connecticut in 1971. Speaking of Leonard's age, one student commented: "He doesn't seem old at all," and "I wish my parents were like that--he doesn't have any prejudices," two pupils commented. Leonard encouraged discussions about various issues about violence and hate, about racial and religious matters, about care and concern for other people, animals and the environment.

He read poems of contemporary events to kids and then asked them to write their feelings about similar subjects. Some poems were related to sensitive matters, and Leonard expected there might be reactions from parents; but as far as he knew, there were none.

The American Indian movement, particularly the uprising at Wounded Knee, black and white confrontation, Vietnam and even a phase of Buddhism were read about, discussed, analyzed and used to stimulate writing. "Some sections, especially in the Vietnam poems," said Leonard, "caused a little squirming in the seats, but seemed to reach, in the majority of cases, an acceptance as a needed part of the poem."

Agony

Take a man, put him alone
Put him 10,000 miles from home
Empty his heart all but blood
Make him live in sweat and mud.

I'll hate you until the day I die
You made me hear my buddy cry
I saw his arm a bloody shred
I heard him say, "This one is dead."

He had the guts to fight and die
He paid the price, but what did he buy?
Agony
Pure agony!

-- Dawn Daniels, pupil

Escaped

We are black
black skinned, that is,
and some of us are white
white skinned.

Our skins have nothing to do
with why we are hated.

It is because the light
from our thoughts and actions
intrudes into the gray.

Remember the Kennedys
John and Robert?

or Martin Luther King
or Gandhi
or Christ.

We were born into the gray
and, no doubt,
will die in the gray.

Damn the gray.

It is like millions of little stones
with shining sharp edges
tossed into a steel barrel
rotated by powerful hands.

Ground to a smooth nothingness

We escaped the barrel

So we will be hunted
imprisoned
murdered.

Perhaps our only reward will be
we shed a little light
for a moment
into the gray.

-- Leonard Halpin

Approaching his first job as a visiting artist, two thoughts were uppermost in Leonard's mind: would old age and lack of academic background get in the way of communicating with children and teachers? His formal education was in the public schools of northern New York. He attended a business college, became a farm worker, served with the military in World War I, was a papermaker, and an office manager in a department store. In 1935 he was incapacitated by polio. He then became assistant manager of the Olympic bobsled run, and after that a laborer in an iron mine, a time-study engineer, and a landscape architect.

Ann Metzinger, music teacher at Memorial Boulevard School, wrote in her report about the Visiting Artists Program: "The kids were fascinated by his many experiences. For some, the idea that Leonard had grown into poetry rather than outgrowing it, coupling his endeavors with a myriad of jobs, was heavy food for thought." The pupils in Ann's two classes were poor readers with little or no background in poetry. Their first attempts to express their thoughts were somewhat awkward and self-conscious, but soon they began writing more than just one poem when given an assignment. One class, which did not respond with much written work, enjoyed discussing ideas. What would it be like to be an Indian?, prompted some lively talk on Wounded Knee, the Indian's regard for animals and the land, and the concept of a tribe.

In Elaine Maitz's art class both she and the pupils felt themselves fortunate to share in the genuine warmth Leonard brought to their weekly sessions. "We discussed the feelings and inner meanings of Leonard's poems," said Elaine. "Many of the children were surprised to find that an 'older man' could have such beautiful thoughts. How was it possible that this gray-haired gentleman with the soft voice, once as a child, would have become so emotionally wrought when he killed a mother woodchuck, that he vowed never again to hurt or injure another living being." A respect for nature is of primary importance to Leonard. Karen Kowalczyk made this the subject of her poem.

As I walk down
the streets of this town,
What do I see?
I see bottles, cans and papers
on city streets
I see garbage all over
the ground
Don't people think before they
throw?
I smell dirt and filth
in the air we breathe
The rivers are dried with
trash and debris
Doesn't anyone care?
Once this was a beautiful
town
With life untouched by man
It can be beautiful
again
If people stop to think before
they throw garbage all over the
place
If factories stop pouring wastes
into our air and streams
They maybe this town can
be beautiful again
If only people stop to
think.

-- Karen Kowalczyk, pupil

A typical class with Leonard Halpin, reported by English teacher, Kathleen Healey: *Frequently he began by giving a few pupils recognition for ideas that they had expressed particularly well in a poem written the previous week, giving each of these pupils a chance to read his or her poem aloud. Next, because he is very concerned with the world as it is right now and the world as it could be, he would talk about an uprising or a war, or the ambulance death of an infant refused admittance at a hospital. With integrity and care he worked to expose the underlying truth. He taught that people should care about other people. He made assignments to write poetry of any length about the truths underlying current situations.*

Leonard chose subjects he hoped would stimulate kids' minds and promote awareness of their own capabilities. Perhaps this pupil spoke for others: "Before he came I never knew I could write poems. But now I know I can." And it was all right for whimsy to stand alongside the serious.

Mice

I think mice are kind of nice
Their tails are long
Their faces small
They don't have any
chins at all.

Their ears are pink
Their teeth are white
They run about
the house at night.

They bite on things
They shouldn't touch
and nobody seems to
like them much.

But I think they're nice.

-- Maritza Cordero, pupil

The Ocean - My Ocean

Gazing over a lovely sight,
I see the full moon shining.
Below this moon is the ocean,
Below the ocean is my heart.

As dawn breaks softly,
The high tide lies there calm.
As the seagulls swoop low,
The sun sets peacefully.
Quietly this deep blue ocean,
Whispers the sounds of my
Life.

-- Debbie, pupil

Leonard helped kids individually to improve the form of their poems. "When I had made a note on their writing that it should be put into more expressive form, they brought it to me and quickly grasped the reason for certain changes. Admittedly," he added, "this was limited to those of merit either in depth of understanding of the subject of the poem or where a sincere effort to express a thought was evident."

Speaking about the poetry program, Leonard felt he could not have achieved the measure of success he did without the assistance of the dedicated teachers. Pupils and teachers agreed that Leonard, in his "dignified way," as Kathleen Healey put it, erased the generation gap "by examining the simple truths of life that are common to all men, women, and children."

NORTHWEST POETRY PROJECT

Something to do with the Middle Ages

The television sets us
to a distance
with its voices gray and curving
like fragile buttresses

we do not have to listen

and I have never said
the things I had to say:

My gift to you
is silence
spread open on my lap,
short-coated bat.
I have worked long on these
articulations
carving their nests
into my arms.

It flies, my bat,
tapping a cane
along these walls
we've made
do with;
your dependency
and mine,
shoved back in our throats
like sand.

I am ruthless
while you sleep,
searching your desks
for things that we said
that you could forget;
I take them back
as relics
one would build a church
around.
I am repossessing
our relationship;
and in return
your heavy breaths
pile your life
like old news onto mine,
moving with the weight,
careful not to wake you,
the floor still creaks
like bones
with every step.
I am committing you,
mute as a madman
to my memory.

-- Nina McCabe, pupil,
Simon's Rock School
Mark Van Doren Poetry Award
Winner - 1972

The annual spring contest is the concluding highlight to an active year of poetry for students who live in the Northwest Connecticut-Southwest Massachusetts region. The Project now in its fourth year, and still going strong, presently consists of seven member secondary schools: Torrington High School, Salisbury School, Housatonic Valley Regional High School (Falls Village), Berkshire School (Sheffield, Massachusetts), Westledge School (West Simsbury), The Gunnery (Washington) and Hotchkiss School (Lakeville). Simon's Rock, interested in promulgating an early college image, started its own program last year, inviting poets Phillip Levine and Michael Harper. Visiting poets come to the schools for a day, give readings, conduct talks and informal readings, mostly of their own works and the writing process, and hold workshops for interested student-poets. This year from October 15 to May 25 the program scheduled Gerald Hausman, Ron Atkinson, Harold Bond, Carolyn Kizer, Dick Lourie, Terry Stokes, Thom Gunn, Donald Hall and Galway Kinnell.

The poetry project is the result of a lot of work by a few people. Back in 1966 William DeVoti was teaching in the New York City public schools. A poet himself, he attended a series of courses organized by the Academy of American Poets, in which a different poet each week came to talk about writing, reading and teaching poetry. When DeVoti left New York to come to the Housatonic Valley Regional High School English department his department chairman, Don Kobler, suggested they start a similar program for the Connecticut-Massachusetts region. They began by arranging a meeting with Mark Van Doren and representatives of the area schools. Frances Barrett of Torrington High School, Chris Carlisle of Hotchkiss, and DeVoti formed a steering committee and things were underway. Seventeen poets came to the area the first year. The following year fewer poets were invited but for longer periods of time. This made it possible for students and teachers to work more closely with the poets. The program expanded until there were both in-school and evening public readings.

As coordinator, DeVoti knows the realities--difficult, painful and joyous, of pursuing what he set out to do. He is dedicated to poetry and to students. The flow of impressions, the personalities, the vital life of the Project can be perceived vividly in a letter DeVoti wrote when I asked him to tell about the program for this report:

Dear Kathleen,

Sorry to hold you up on this--the Kinnell reading took a lot of my attention and I've been going through a lot of introspection about the whole program and my place in it. I had to make some decisions before I wrote you, and I'll probably make some as I write ....

Four years ago, when we had the guidance of that good and wise man and great poet, Mark Van Doren, we conceived of this program as a way to help the schools get their heads out of the sand. To forget for awhile about contracts, benefits, scheduling, public relations, paper clips, etc.--if not to forget about the mundane necessities attached to a system, at least to look at other possibilities; specifically, to have an outright affair with language, rather than keeping it pent up in the confines of respectable husbandry--it does more than the work of the world, and poets, more than most artists, know this; perhaps that is why their creative spirit is personified as feminine, although I'm not too sure how this works with girl poets.

Well, things worked; almost everything we tried had a magic touch to it. There were large audiences at the public readings; kids were enchanted in the classrooms, many entertained by language and not vaudeville for perhaps the first time since they were learning to speak. Many were inspired and got into writing. Some of the "intellectuals" began to come in touch once again with their emotions; some of the kids who were pegged as "losers" began to see the creative spirit within themselves and found talents that were acceptable to the establishment--but most of all to themselves; they became productive, accomplished, and gratified. Even many from the great average or center, I think, got a glimpse of a poet who wasn't a "fairy" as they suspected all poets must be, and felt language communicate to feelings trapped so deep within. John Haines brought to them some of the loneliness and desolation and beauty of his experience of twenty years on the icy Alaskan tundra. Galway Kinnell brought them to face the terrible merging of Eros and Thanatos that we all must face eventually, though for most of us in silence. Mark Van Doren showed how great it is to love and to praise all things. Donald Hall brought to them a language of the subconscious. Shirley Kaufman and Kathleen Frazer exploded the myth of a generation gap. Dick Lourie showed the relationship that often exists between music and words. It's not accurate to fragment the experiences as I just have, not to imply that profound, or even measurable changes occurred in all who participated one way or the other. But there have been enough examples of individual changes to indicate that something is happening that hasn't happened as often as before the program when poetry was "taught" from books by teachers who often were covering it as a "unit" to be replaced after a lapse of time by units on journalism, propaganda, grammar, and how to write a business letter.

One thing to remember in a program such as this one is the eternal element of change. For the program to remain vital it, like all of us, must take advantage of the natural rhythms of change. It needs strong, almost dictatorial leadership in the beginning if the communal impulse is weak, but there is a time when personal involvement on the part of the components becomes more important than the efficiency of a smooth-running system; after all, wasn't this the problem in the first place? Mark Van Doren tried to tell me this two years ago, but I was too involved in the "success" of the program to be aware of a deeper importance that was necessary. What I see now is that the organization must withdraw and the individual schools must do for themselves. Without that kind of responsibility, personal involvement will only be superficial. There is much more to be gained by a total involvement; as director for four years I learned that.

So, each of the seven schools in the program is being encouraged to continue with at least the same funds allocated at each school in the past. I've encouraged them to apply for grants from the Arts Commission on their own. My own school has decided to triple the funds allocated for this type of program, and launch a poets and artists type humanities program to enrich the English elective program that we have been using for the past two years. There is a great deal of enthusiasm about this program at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, and it's being planned by the entire English department, with hopes of involving other departments too--naturally social studies and art and music fit easily into this.

Other problems? Well, administrators are notorious for their aversions to "waves". It reminds me of the old joke about the devil in a motorboat and all the poor souls buried in shit up to the bottom of their lower lips. IF YOU'RE IN THAT KIND OF SITUATION, WAVES ARE TROUBLE. As long as we got good press and a happy (if not apathetic) community, the suspender pullers were behind us 100%. When things got a little rough--especially when some people discovered that poets sometimes use as parts of their poems, in public, the words we all reserve for private--they began to equivocate. As Dick Lourie observed after a fire drill occurred during his reading at a nearby public school, and the kids in the audience somehow got returned to the classrooms instead of the reading, "You can say KILL in public any day of the week, but don't dare say FUCK." Our own top brass was more interested in placating the arousement of a few than in facing the issues squarely and honestly as educators should, and the kids and the teachers did. They were able to discuss honestly the multiple implications of the issue--there was disagreement, but little hypocrisy.

Got to quit now, Kathleen .... I promised myself I would begin going to poetry readings again for pleasure, without having to worry about the organization behind it. There is one in NYC tonight at the Brooklyn Bridge; among other things Galway Kinnell will be reading Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry", on a ferry boat provided by the NYC & the Academy of American Poets. I'm going .....

Yours,

Bill

In a brief note a few days later he wrote: "Enjoyment? A thrilling one-time event, but after getting home at 3:00 AM and a full day at school and Gerry Hausman (another good reading) tonight at Berkshire, I'm ready to drop. It was worth it to hear Kinnell read 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'."

What helps make a good reading--other than the poet? or an exciting classroom poetry session or a working workshop that is also fun? The kind of support and open enthusiasm poets meet in DeVoti makes them feel welcome; they can relax and be themselves. They were invited because what they have to give is wanted, whether or not like or dislike is the response. Knowing it's O.K. with their teacher, students are ready to listen. (Maybe this isn't the way it ought to be, but it's the way it is.)

And why do students continue to listen? Bill DeVoti listens to them, what they talk about, what they feel and think about the world. He invites poets students can get "into," and that means a variety of voices: young, old, city, wilderness, men, women, some who sing and play music, all who come to exchange worlds. And DeVoti, through controversy and constant flux (and frustration) is a man to keep the doors open, to allow the changes to occur.

In a letter concerning the continuation of the Salisbury School's membership in the Northwest Poetry Project, the school's Headmaster, The Rev. Edwin H. Ward, said: *We honestly feel that this program is one of the most valuable academic developments which has occurred within this school in recent years. Students, who previously were not involved in or who were even hostile to poetry, through the program, have become interested in and even excited about reading and writing poetry themselves. The opportunity to hear established poets reading their own works and then later to sit down with them in informal conversation and in criticism of the student's own poetry is invaluable. A secondary but important benefit of the program is that it has brought together faculty and students from schools in the area which, otherwise, have all too little contact with one another, . . . This cannot help but strengthen the overall educational program in this area in time.*

And from Housatonic Valley Regional High School, Head of the English department, Donald G. Kobler, in a letter to the Connecticut Commission on the Arts urging continuation of the program and full financial support: "I have found the poets to be surprisingly sensitive and sympathetic in their work with high school students. At the same time, they have set high standards for students to emulate in their own writing and literary analysis." He also speaks of the benefit to himself and other teachers: "I can personally testify that my knowledge of contemporary poetry has been tremendously expanded by the program. In fact, the common learning experience which the program has provided among teachers has served to bring them together in a new and important intellectual bond."

The list of poets coming to the region over the past four years is, indeed, impressive. During its first year some of the poets the Project featured were Galway Kinnell, W.D. Sondgrass, Edward Field, Donald Hall, Diane Wakoski, Shirley Kaufman, L.E. Sissman, and Mark Van Doren. The second year Kathleen Fraser, Donald Junkins and William Matthews were in the area at different times for periods of up to five days; and David Ignatow, Kinnell and William Meredith came for periods of from two to four days. Last year, for five-day periods the Project scheduled Shirley Kaufman, Donald Junkins, Clarence Major and Emmett Jarrett, and for one to two-day periods James Wright, Michael Harper, Michael Horowitz, Gerald Hausman, Halsey Davis, Henry Taylor, Mark Van Doren, and Galway Kinnell.

In a letter to Anthony Keller, Executive Director of the Arts Commission, concerning money from the State Legislature's Appropriations Committee for the Visiting Artists Program, Bill DeVoti wrote about his experience as a classroom teacher and The Poetry Project.

. . . . *I've been able to observe what happens after the artist leaves. My own relationships with students have been strengthened beyond description by the enrichment of their shared experiences in communication. Just one example: a boy here at school who was often in trouble, a typical "turned-off" kid, a certain drop-out, nearly illiterate, began showing up last year at poetry readings and workshops. Gradually he became more and more involved in writing himself. Within a year he has progressed to not a "model" student--we have enough of those--but a diversified thinker who has discovered a talent acceptable to the school, and more importantly, to himself. He now writes good, sometimes startling poetry; his attitude has improved in all classes, and he is staying in school because there is something here for him. He will never make the dean's list, but he may become a poet; he certainly has gained self-respect through success in a previously alien environment, and has channeled his hostilities into an acceptably creative form.*

However, "making the dean's list" and innumerable other measures of traditional education are important to parents. If problems with school administrations are as persistent as crab grass in a suburban lawn, often they are signs of pressure from the community. The rapid changes in our society and consequent struggles cannot be smoothed over by energetic denials. What became known as the "Battle of Housatonic Valley" began with fear of educational change and suspicion of the artist as culprit. On February 17, 1972, Clarence Major, a noted young black poet, read at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. His poetry is an honest, sometimes brutal expression of what life is like for a black American. Although Richard Hayward in The Lakeville Journal wrote positively about Clarence Major's ability, an indignant parent was angry over the use of "dirty" words. She complained in the Journal: "I sat with my fourteen year-old son and listened to 'unpublished' poems being read to an audience of an assortment of ages, and was thoroughly disgusted and shocked by what I was hearing. The filthy language ... was abhorrent! ... Shouldn't this and every other program be screened by some authority?" Bill DeVoti answered in the same newspaper: *No one can blame Mrs. Johnson for not having grown up in a black ghetto, or for not having to face the human indignities that emerge from such social catastrophes, but is she being fair to young adults by denying them the opportunity to consider and perhaps begin to understand the outrage of such an experience--in the language of the experience--and perhaps even to feel the uplift when that wonderful thing sometimes happens, "a significant experience, intrinsically human . . . " emerges? ... And if some obscene matter should slip by us, is our children's moral fabric so flimsy that they would become so easily corrupted? I think we are all damaged much more by the things we have not heard.*

But the controversy spread to teachers, more parents, students; there were meetings, reports and an editorial in The Lakeville Journal which stated that the parents' wish to shield their children "...from sordid or unpleasant situations..." was "exaggerated," and that "if anything is to be done effectively to counteract such evils (as slums) corroding our society, it will be partly because today's young people know and care."

A sophomore at Housatonic Valley, Laura Berland, joined the conflict with her letter: "Most parents want their children to grow up and act in a mature, responsible way by the time they reach high school, yet at the same time they try to shelter them from the real world and keep them like infants." The Poetry Project had helped her and other students from remaining "...isolated from the outside world and provincial in our attitudes."

In April, two months after Clarence Major's reading, parents and school board members met to discuss the incident. Mark Van Doren attended and was reported in the Waterbury Republican as defending the poet, saying: "I love dirty words myself, I've loved them all my life. I think they're wonderful ... No self-respecting poet will ever come here again, on the assumption he's being screened." Apparently the meeting ended amicably. It was suggested that DeVoti not have the sole responsibility for choosing poets. He pointed out that he had been trying to secure assistance in administering the program for two years, and that he would welcome help.

In a recent letter to Kathleen and Richard, Bill expanded on his idea of member schools taking initiative in securing funds for themselves in continuing their poetry programs to include the notion of the classroom teacher being directly involved: *If anyone is concerned about the dynamics of effective education -- not necessarily a system that is smooth-running and efficient, that gets the books collected on time, and the reports properly filed, and the right things in the local newspapers; but the kind of education that will snap minds to attention, arouse curiosity, demand honest questioning of the true nature of things -- if anyone is concerned about this anymore, it is the classroom teacher, especially those who have resisted the "glory" of promotion up and out. I think enough of them do care so that if you make these programs available, they will fight to keep them going; and the students will support them and so will the enlightened portion of any community. That doesn't mean that every program will be a total success, or that every controversy will have a satisfactory outcome, but even in the process of losing out to the up-tight, we'll end up with better education. In fact, I think I'll remember that as a definition of true education -- the process of losing out to the up-tight.*

CONNECTICUT POETRY CIRCUIT

At the request of the Academy of American Poets, Holly Stevens, daughter of the poet, Wallace Stevens, organized the New England Poetry Circuit in 1963. By 1968 the number of schools participating had grown too large to be managed conveniently: so the Circuit split in two, and with the encouragement of the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, the Connecticut Poetry Circuit and the Northern New England Poetry Circuit were established. Upon Miss Stevens' retirement, William Burney of Central Connecticut State College was named Acting Director of the Connecticut Poetry Circuit in 1968-70. Jean Maynard of Wesleyan University has served as Director since that time.

The purpose of the Circuit is to organize colleges in the state so a poet can travel conveniently from one to another giving readings from his/her works. This arrangement brings financial gain to the poet by booking a number of readings for him within a concentrated period of time. It also makes it possible for a college to engage a poet at less expense than it would incur if it invited him or her on its own.

Three poetry programs are offered by the Circuit each year, one in November, one in February, and one in April. The poets are selected by the Circuit's selection committee: John Malcolm Brinnin, Louis Coxe, Richard Eberhart, David Ferry, William Meredith, James Merrill, Holly Stevens, and Richard Wilbur. The Director notifies the various school representatives of the poets selected, sets up the itineraries for the poets, and distributes appropriate publicity material. A grant from the Arts Commission pays for travel expenses, which enables the Circuit to bring poets from far sections of the country. It also pays for office expenses involved in running the Circuit. Since 1964 the following distinguished poets have toured: A. R. Ammons, Irving Feldman, Jean Garrigue, Thom Gunn, Michael Harper, Anthony Hecht, Daryl Hine, Richard Howard, Barbara Howes, David Ignatow, Donald Justice, X. J. Kennedy, Galway Kinnell, William Meredith, James Merrill, Bink Noll, Adrienne Rich, James Scully, Louis Simpson, Mark Strand, Robert Sward, May Swenson, and Derek Walcott.

From 1968-1973 the following schools have participated in the Circuit: Central Connecticut State College, Connecticut College, Greater Hartford Community College, The Gunnery, Housatonic Community College, Manchester Community College, Miss Porter's School, Quinnipiac College, Southern Connecticut State College, Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, Yale University, Wesleyan University, Western Connecticut State College, Westledge School.

Under William Burney's directorship the first tour by Four Connecticut Student Poets was organized in February, 1970. Each year since that time colleges in the state are invited to select undergraduate student poets to try for a place on the February tour. Manuscripts by the students are received in the fall. They are coded and sent to the members of the Circuit's selection committee, who choose the final four. While on tour, the students enjoy the same opportunity offered to professionals and divide the $100 honorarium among themselves. In the past four years 16 students have enjoyed this unique experience. The fine quality of student verse is illustrated in the following poem by Frank Levering, class of 1974, Wesleyan University, who toured in February, 1973.

Knife's Edge

God, lost God, I walk no other way.
No time to hesitate.
No time to wait
and see.
No time at all.
The knife is what I have.
The edge is my thin path.
No time or space at all.

Where are you, now that I'm to be?
I wake to walk the day.
I stop to go.
I walk so fast, I'm slow.
My balance doesn't know
a destination.
It lacks a steady nerve.
God, lost God, someone,
be present if I swerve,
find me if I fall.

-- Frank Levering

EDITOR'S SUMMARY

During the four months of field work for the poetry program report I was in high schools and colleges, talked with students and teachers, met with administrators, and became acquainted with poets. What I saw happening was a revision of language as art, writing and poetry becoming events more people might enjoy. The language of poetry is concerned with what words do for human beings. Since words are inseparable from our feelings, how we use words tells us what is happening to us. Our language can trap as well as liberate us. But with new insight we know better who we are, what we need and how to speak our need, how to give it the shape of our voice in shaping or rearranging the world.

The poet coming into the classroom usually believes in student, pupil-centered values. S/he does not have an answer for the query: what do you want me to do? Pupils have been trained to ask that question rather than ask: what do I want? Results are not always what is expected by the schools. Many administrators, teachers and others tended to measure the success of the poetry program by the smoothness of its operation. There was little on-going trust in process and much anxiety about the results; as a consequence, the pupils and student teachers often were lost sight of in these conflicts.

The poets also could be impatient with the present institutional structures. Working for change is not easy. If the artist revolts to the detriment of the students then s/he is not fully in touch with the wholeness of a learning revolution.

The poet sometimes was seen as celebrity or received with resentment. In both cases, important aspects of the program are jeopardized: the demystification of poetry and the poet experienced as a human being.

Going back to what I said about the effects of a personal voice, I want to speak about the importance of increasing our awareness of the sexual oppression in our language. It is impossible to find, other than in articles within the past two years, a women's existence given credence on the printed page or in people's speech: the male pronoun stands for all the human race, for all creatures and god. What is the effect on her feminine psyche when every time she picks up a book she reads hundreds of pages of him, his, himself, he, men, mankind, man? We can only benefit from recognizing the feminine part of ourselves, whether we are male or female. Any oppression of another is a denial of our whole self.

The radicalization of our consciousness requires a recognition of how we are led to imagine ourselves and why. To do this we need access to our imaginations and our honest feelings. We need new images. All of us in the poetry program, particularly the poets, can work through our language for a reversal of the accepted supremacy of any creature or aspect of nature over another.

The cooperative nature of this report is what I want to stress and the help I received from those involved in the program's venture. During the preparation and writing, Richard Place provided important insights and encouragements. I am grateful for his patient discussions and the conscience he brought to bear on controversial views. It was his gentle and lenient manner which made it possible for me to work with greater freedom and allowed for a constant reassessing of my observations and experiences.

The Commission on the Arts expressly wanted to present "what is" within each chapter. If I have been able to record and bring together some of the how and why of what happened in the poetry program I think this is potentially an unusually helpful report. The candor of many of the people in the poetry program is, I hope, ultimately what we hear.

PROJECT DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

I would like to suggest a few conditions under which improvements might be made in future student teacher programs involving poets. Because these efforts bring together individuals with a diversity of interests, capabilities and points of view, there is a need for the following:

Greater understanding of poet's role as artist-teacher, his/her needs in this role, and administrator's understanding, respect, and acceptance of defined responsibilities and needs.

Greater commitment on the part of administrators to formulate methods through which innovative programming can become part of the teacher training structure.

Greater clarity as to purposes and objectives of a program once placed in a cooperating school. (It seems that if student teachers, cooperating teachers, and poets are not provided with absolute clarity as to role responsibilities, once faced with a class of pupils, only exceptionally well adjusted adults can work smoothly with each other.)

Greater choices and alternatives for student teachers with respect to their involvements with visiting poet(s). With the pressures on student teachers to produce, coupled with their extremely diverse abilities to do so, a program such as this, if tightly structured, leads to either/or situations which lack the dimension needed to approach the core of the problem.

Greater patience on the part of administrators to discover observable changes in student teacher and pupil awareness. Present attitudes undermine thoughtful reflection which leads to wisdom. These should be changed if administrators are to develop modern, flexible and wise teacher training situations.

Greater patience on the part of poets attempting to encourage changes in attitudes of administrators, supervisors and cooperating teachers. Poets (all artists) must remember that their choice to live an anomalous life cannot be easily understood by those who choose not to do so. Americans, influenced to react aggressively to a threatening situation, often lack the ability to understand the artist. The poet must understand his/her own personal part in this often aggressive reaction/action/reaction chain.

These observations stem from my reading the journals of student teachers who participated in the programs at Central and Southern Connecticut State Colleges. Some of the student teachers were caught late in their training with a frightening thought: How do I reconcile the poet's methods of teaching poetry in the schools with the vastly different techniques I have learned from my methods teacher and others who have taught me during the course of my training to become an English teacher? Such a dilemma involving a number of sensitive choices (affecting loyalties, job recommendations and performance evaluation) coming late in one's education can and did cause serious hardships for many student teachers. These hardships often appear to be the result of ideological conflicts between poets and college personnel with respect to the teaching of poetry in the schools. If the student teachers' hardships arise from this condition, future programming should make plans to confront and resolve these conflicts before a program begins working with student teachers. Many of the specific problems facing this program are, of course, indicative of larger issues facing American Education, which cannot be quickly worked out. This presents us with a long, difficult journey, which can only be made one step at a time.

In my capacity as project director, I developed strong personal feelings with respect to the interactions I observed between poets, methods teachers, supervisors, administrators, cooperating teachers and student teachers. Consistently, these feelings led me to angry outbursts, pointed criticisms and bitter conclusions. I often felt as though I was in the middle of a cold war, caught in the crossfire of sharp glances, painful looks, anguished expressions and sad stares.

Unfortunately, artists and educators are still (for the most part) worlds apart in their understandings of each other. While working with the program, I heard much complaining on the part of both artists and educators with respect to this fact; and, despite the openness and honesty of the complaints, a serious personal and professional separation still existed between most of the poets and educators when the year was over. This separation cannot continue if we are to educate truly creative individuals prepared to direct their lives with purpose, imagination and self-awareness.

EVALUATION: POETRY PROGRAMS -- CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES

A PREAMBLE

This is a report on a small but important effort in the long and often fruitless battle to carve out a place for the experience of poetry in the school curriculum.

We do not here address the question of whether a society can long exist numb to poetry. Ours is the smaller question: Can the schools reinstate poetry as a major experience in the life of more young people? This is to ask whether schoolteachers can learn to treat poetry at once as (1) experience, (2) examined experience, and (3) the creation of poetry. There is no need to document the fact that poetry as it is taught in the schools is often the victim of its best friends: the teachers of English.

The question then arises as to whether poetry can be restored in the schools, and if so, who can do it and how? The Poets in the Colleges project is one answer to that question. It proposes to test the simple assumptions that teachers are not often poets, that poets are not often teachers, and that therefore future teachers must in part be taught how to teach poetry by poets. A final question remains to be answered: Can poetry be taught in the schools without the help of poets who on occasion come to teach poetry and to join in partnership with the teachers of English? Is not this question the same as the one that asks whether music in the schools must be taught by musicians, mathematics by mathematicians, and art by artists?

THE STRATEGY OF THE REPORT

This report on the Poets in the Colleges Program attempts to examine the program as it functioned in 1972-73 at two institutions: Central Connecticut State College and Southern Connecticut State College. The principal strategy of the report will be to establish the objectives of the program and then to comment on the perceptions and impressions of the people most closely involved in it: (1) the high school and junior high school pupils who were taught by poets and student teachers from the two colleges, (2) the student teachers, (3) the college supervisors of student teaching, who also were involved in offering the course in methods of teaching English--in which the poets were to participate (4) the poets themselves, and (5) the cooperating teachers. The data for this portion of the report were secured by way of questionnaires, journals, interviews, and written statements from selected participants.

After the presentation of these findings, the report will focus on (1) an analysis of the factors relating to the outcomes of the program and (2) recommendations and suggestions for the operation of the program.

The report will deal separately with each of the two colleges, since the program at each site was essentially self-contained, each with its own student teachers, college supervisors, poet, and cooperating public schools.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The poetry project faces two problems because it sets out two interrelated objectives: (1) to improve the collegiate courses in which future teachers are instructed in the teaching of poetry, and (2) to improve the actual in-class competences of these student teachers when they enter the classroom to teach poetry.

These primary objectives are spelled out in greater detail in the volume entitled Artists in the Classroom (Connecticut Commission on the Arts, 1973):

> "Our School programs are more concerned with the development of sensitivities than with the development of skills" (p. 13).
>
> "The essence of the process is the exploration of the senses through artistic media and the guidance of practicing artists" (p. 13).

Dr. Diane Shugert (Central Connecticut State College supervisor of student teaching) "suggests that visiting poets 'know that this program concentrates not on teaching high school students but rather on teaching student-teachers to teach high school students'" (p. 113). This view is further amplified: "...the best use of a visiting poet's talents would appear to be in developing the collaborative and personal writing skills of the college students" (p.113).

> (The objectives or policies set out above should be kept in mind in the evaluation of the program, since the role of the poet in the schoolroom turns out to be a major source of ambiguity in the entire project. Some other views about the role of the artist in the school must also be noted, as in the paragraphs below.)

The artists and poets work "as paraprofessionals in the classroom" (p. 10). (Question: Does a "paraprofessional" teach?) "... the artist is in no way a substitute.... They do not enter the school as teachers..." (pp. 13-14).

> (It may be noted here that the emphasis on the poet's not being a teacher is not complemented by an operational definition of what a "paraprofessional" does do in the classroom.)

"The Commission's primary goal in each project was to encourage student teachers to arrive at new attitudes in the teaching of writing and literature in the public schools. Through workshops at the colleges and practice teaching in secondary schools, student teachers were supposed to be helped by the poets to explore new ways of motivating children to write and think creatively" (p. 98).

In any event, we have indicated (1) what the objectives of the poet's program are, (2) what the poet should be: a paraprofessional in the schoolroom, and a teacher or co-teacher of student-teachers in the college course on methods of teaching English, and (3) that neither of the poet's roles is clearly set forth.

THE OBJECTIVES RECONSIDERED

If we reexamine the objectives of the program as established by the Commission, we come face to face with a thorny problem: What convincing evidence shall we seek concerning the competences of the student teachers to motivate children "to write and think creatively" about poetry? The answer is that there are two kinds of criterion measures for the competence of teachers. The first is the professional judgments of individuals competent in the teaching of poetry. The second is evidence that the pupils taught by the student teachers have to some satisfactory degree increased their competences in thinking creatively about poetry and in writing poetry. The first kind of criterion, the judgments of experts, does not tap directly into what the pupils have learned. The second, the actual performance and views of the pupils themselves, comes closer to the objective of the Commission, but their views are uneducated and judgments about their work are extremely fallible. These weaknesses in criterion measures are multiplied by the fact that the actual teaching, perhaps contrary to the design of the Commission, appears to have been done by the poets in some kind of partnership with the student teachers. We are therefore unable to isolate the contribution made by either of the partners alone.

Our solution to the dilemma is simply to present two major categories of evidence: (1) that provided by the pupils concerning their experience in the poetry program as a whole, and (2) the views of student teachers about their experience in the methods courses taught by the poets and about their actual experiences in the high school and junior high schools where they taught. It seems likely that the observations of competent judges, college supervisors, and cooperating teachers, were not intense enough to provide a firm basis for final judgments, although their views will also be presented.

We hasten to add that all the kinds of evidence we shall consider here are inadequate to the burden we shall place upon them. We have, at best, only a weak basis for final judgments. Our only apology for this apology is that the evidence presented is the best we have been able to gather under the complex conditions of the poet's program as it evolved in the college methods courses and in the classrooms where the poets and student teachers taught, and where the aid of some cooperating teachers undoubtedly contributed much to both what the pupils and student teachers learned, and to the complexity of the problem of evaluating the program.

This report will therefore present first the data provided by the pupils, then the data provided by the student teachers, and finally the educated opinions of the college supervisor, the poet, and some few cooperating teachers. Our own views will also, of course, be visible in the report.

SOURCES OF DATA

Definitions:

Control group: Those pupils not slated to participate in the poet's program.

Experimental group: pupils in groups or classes scheduled to participate in the poet's program.

Pretest group: pupils replying to questionnaire, including those scheduled to participate in the program and those who were not.

Post-test group: pupils actually participating in the experimental program. (Assumed to be practically the same pupils replying to the pretest questionnaire and designated as "the experimental group." This is, however, only an untested assumption.)

Sites:

Central Connecticut State College
Southern Connecticut State College

Number of Schools reporting:

Central: 3 secondary schools
Southern: 3 secondary schools
Total: 6

Number of classes reporting on pretest:

Central: 10 classes
Southern: 7 classes

Number of classes in poetry program:

Central: 5 classes (or groups)
Southern: 5 classes (or groups)

*Some small groups (3 to 5 pupils) were omitted from the tabulations of response, as were two control classes.

Approximate number of pupils reporting on pretest:

Central: 195
Southern: 84

Total: 279

Approximate number of pupils in pretest-experimental group:

Central: 112
Southern: 59

Total: 171

Approximate number of pupils in pretest-control group:

Central: 83
Southern: 25

Total: 108

Approximate number of pupils reporting in post-program classes:

Central: 102
Southern: 54

Total: 156

RESPONSES FROM PUPILS

Two questionnaires provide the data designed to assess the high school and junior high school pupils' responses to selected aspects of the poetry program. The "pretest" questionnaires were administered prior to the initiation of the program (1) to a sample of pupils not scheduled to participate (called the "control" group), and (2) to the pupils scheduled to work with the poet and student teachers from the two colleges. The "post-test" questionnaires were administered to the high school and junior high school pupils after completion of the poetry program, and polled only participants in it.

Although some technical research terms are used in this report, they should be viewed simply as handy designations. They do not indicate that the data collected will be treated as though representing a rigorous research design or intent. On the contrary, the conditions for collection of the data (and the treatment of the data itself) represent only a fairly loose, informal effort to get some relevant information from the pupils. These data are primarily designed to evoke questions, although on some occasions a few guesses about the implications of the data are ventured.

The pretest or pre-program questionnaire is composed of two parts, as follows:

Part I: In my opinion is a section designed to secure from pupils their free, written responses to open-ended questions like "In my opinion, most poets..."

Part II: Likes-Dislikes is a section designed to tap information on the pupils' likes and dislikes concerning in-class and out-of-class activities relating to poetry. Responses were by numbers:

1. Like very much; 2. Like somewhat; 3. Neither like nor dislike; 4. Dislike somewhat; 5. Dislike very much. Two examples of items are: "Writing poetry in class" and "Reading poetry in my free time."

The post-test or post-program questionnaire is composed of four parts, as follows:

Part I: Identical with Part I of the pretest.

Part II: Identical with Part II of the pretest.

Part III: Interests: a set of questions designed to tap pupils' opinions about the effects of the poetry program on (1) their future interest in activities related to poetry, and (2) their learnings in the program itself.

Part IV: The Instruction: a list of adjectives to be checked only if the pupils believe that they apply to their poet-teacher. e.g., successful; unsuccessful; well informed about poetry; poorly informed about poetry.

(Similar information relating to the student teachers was collected but is not reported here.)

RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL SITE

I. In my opinion

1. most poets

(Free [written] responses* were coded simply as "favorable or positive" opinions about poets, "unfavorable or negative" responses, and "nonclassifiable" in these categories. Examples of responses: Favorable: Poets express feelings well; Unfavorable: They rot; Unclassifiable: Never knew any.)

In the Central group the total pre-program responses were 94 (57%) favorable to 71 (43%) unfavorable for the pupils that responded to the question. The replies of pupils not slated to take the poetry program were 60% favorable and 40% unfavorable to "poets." Those pupils slated to participate in the poetry program were about equally divided (50% to 50%) between like and dislike on this item.

At the completion of the program, responses were 67% favorable to 33% unfavorable, indicating that the experiences of the program may have improved the opinions of the participants substantially concerning poets in general (or, possibly, concerning the poet working at Central).

It may be that, in the final analysis, the most meaningful data could be that secured from classes or groups.

Class	*Pre-Program Score*		*Post-Program Score*	
	Positive	*Negative*	*Positive*	*Negative*
Seventh grade	6	12	15	4
Honors-8th grade	6	10	3	7
Above average 9th grade	10	7	16	1
Low average 10th grade	9	6	6	10
Creative writing 12th grade	7	4	5	0

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*Scores for this section entitled "In my opinion," represent the number of responses not the number of pupils. Some pupils did not reply at all, others may have written several responses.

It appears that the views of the seventh and the ninth grade groups about poets improved substantially in the course of the program. Those of the eighth grade and the tenth grade groups seem to have deteriorated. The data about the twelfth grade group seems too attenuated by attrition in numbers of responses to support interpretation.

I. In my opinion

2. the poetry I've read in school

	Favorable	*Unfavorable*
Pretest group	*61 (37%)*	*105 (63%)*
Control group	*19 (29%)*	*46 (71%)*
Post-test group	*42 (41%)*	*59 (59%)*

1. The poetry read in school is generally not very favorably perceived by the pretest pupils: 63% find it not to their taste.
2. The control group is even more unfavorably disposed.
3. Those who took the poetry program (post-test group) shifted a little to a favorable view in school. However, an omission in the wording of this item may have made the interpretation offered here untenable. The item in the post-test should have read: "In my opinion the poetry I've read in school during the poetry program..." Our assumption, nevertheless has been that the pupils in the poetry program probably did indeed refer the question to the poetry they had read during the program.

I. In my opinion

3. working with a poet in writing poetry

Even before the program had begun, the idea of working with a poet in writing poetry seems to have held a strong attraction for the pupils in the Central group. Seventy percent of all votes were favorable to the prospect. That is, one might say that at the Central site the poet and the poet's program stood a good chance of succeeding--conditions were propitious. In truth, the chances were even higher than the gross count on this item made it appear. In the control group (those not slated to participate), 60 percent viewed the prospect favorably, whereas the experimental group were about 78 percent favorably, whereas the experimental group were about 78 percent favorably predisposed to the experience.

As it turned out, the pre-program scores were so favorable that post-program scores might well have been "bumping up against the ceiling." In any event, the *post-program* scores on working with the poet to write poetry showed a probably non-significant improvement, moving up from 78 to 80 percent. On the other hand, the high anticipatory score was clearly *not* eroded by the actual experiences of working with the poet and writing poetry, among a group of pupils strongly predisposed to view it favorably to start.

It seems permissable to speculate that the idea of working with a real live poet in writing poetry appeals in prospect to a surprisingly large number of pupils, and that the pupils at the Central schools were not disappointed in their high expectations.

One possible reversal of this finding may have occurred in one class, but the pre-post data for this class are perhaps too dubious to support this interpretation: only 14 pupils reported on this item in the pre-test (9 favorable, 5 unfavorable), whereas 21 pupils reported in the post-test (9 favorable, 12 unfavorable). It is additionally worth noting that this class is characterized as being among the "low" academic achievers, in contrast to the other classes and group, which are described as "above average," "honors" or "creative writing" classes.

> *A Note*: In the interpretation of pretest and post-test results throughout this report on responses from pupils, an unverified assumption is made that the membership of the pretest experimental group was substantially the same as that of the group that eventually took the program with the poet. It is possible, however, that at both the Central and the Southern sites the classes may have lost some of the pupils who were most strongly alienated from the program. Such attrition might have a powerful effect on the scores observed among the pupils in the program.

I. In my opinion

4. poetry

In this item an attempt was made to sound out the pupils' attitudes toward poetry generally, in contrast to the poetry studied in school (see item 2).

In the pretest group the responses were surprisingly favorable. They certainly were more favorable than our own stereotypical expectations. Of 144 responses, 100 were favorable. The control group was 67% favorable; the experimental group was 71% favorable.

At the end of the program the experimental group's score was 65% favorable. The "low academic" group reversed its scores from 11 favorable and 5 unfavorable in the pretest to 8 favorable and 11 unfavorable in the post-test. The evidence seems to support a hunch that the "low academic" group may have had a "bad trip."

It is both interesting and saddening to speculate that poetry read during these pupils' school careers is rated lower than poetry in general. Poetry read in school was rated favorably by 29% of the control group and by 41% of the experimental group (see item 2). In the item reported here, poetry in general was rated favorably by 67% of the control group and 71% of the experimental group.

II. Like Dislike

1. studying poetry in class

For the entire pretest group, "studying poetry in class" was generally viewed with distaste. Of 181 responses, 79 (44%) were "like", to 102 (56%) "dislike." The control group scored 23 (32%) like to 49 (68%) dislike votes. The experimental group scored 56 (56%) like votes to 44 (44%) dislike. The reversals between control and experimental groups here emphasize strongly the favorable "bias" of the pupils destined to participate in the program at the Central site.

The post-program scores of the experimental group on this item were 53 (63%) like to 31 (37%) dislike.

One might entertain the hunch that the experiences of the poetry program increased the pupils' enjoyment of the study of poetry in school. If so, the program might be considered to have done fairly well in achieving one of the ultimate criteria of the experimental program.

II. Like Dislike

2. reading poetry silently in class

The pupils taking the pretest registered 77 (48%) "like" scores to 85 (52%) "dislike" for reading poetry silently in class. On this item the control group registered 24 (38%) like to 39 (62%) dislike votes. The experimental group recorded 53 (54%) likes to 46 (46%) dislikes. Neither group could be termed enthusiastic about sitting in class and reading poetry silently.

II. Like Dislike

3. reading poetry aloud in class

It seems fair to guess that the pupils' liking for reading poetry aloud in class would improve in a program featuring readings by the poet, pupils, and others. The like-dislike scores are set out below:

	% Like	*% Dislike*
Total pre-program scores (experimental and control groups)	*40*	*60*
Pre-program experimental group	*45*	*55*
Pre-program control group	*33*	*67*
Post-program scores of experimental group	*48*	*52*

The scores on reading aloud in class seem not to have changed very much for the experimental group, up from 45% to 48%.

II. Like-Dislike
4. listening to poetry in class

The pre-program percentages on like-dislike for listening to poetry in class are listed below:

	% Like	*% Dislike*
Total pre-program scores	*62*	*38*
Pre-program experimental group	*66*	*34*
Pre-program control group	*54*	*46*
Post program scores of experimental group	*69*	*31*

The scores of the experimental group did not improve substantially.

II. Like-Dislike
5. Discussing poetry in class

The total pretest group evidenced a strong dislike for "discussing poetry in class." Of 160 responses, 35% recorded like votes, to 65% who recorded dislike. Forty-five percent of the experimental group voted "like" on the pretest. After the completion of the poetry program their scores changed only slightly to 48% "like."

II. Like-Dislike
6. writing poetry in class

Perhaps the most salient characteristic of the poetry program was its emphasis on the writing of original poetry by pupils. The pretest like-dislike scores are more informative if viewed by classes than by agglomerates. For example, only two groups voted "like" more frequently than dislike: 12 to 7 in a seventh grade "above average" class and 18 to 5 in a creative writing (elective) class. Eight other classes registered like-dislike scores of 9 to 10, 5 to 6, 8 to 11, 3 to 7, 6 to 10, 4 to 19, 3 to 17, and 6 to 7. The 4 to 19 scores were registered by a "low academic" group in the experimental group, whereas the 3 to 17 score came from an "above average" class in the control group.

The experimental group as a whole voted 50% to 50% like-dislike in the pretest. The post-program scores for this group were 61% "like", a substantial increase that may speak well for the program at Central.

II. Like-Dislike

7-11. studying, reading, writing, listening to, and discussing poetry in my free time

Five items were designed to assess the "before and after" responses of the experimental and control pupils in the program in relation to studying, reading, writing, listening to, and discussing poetry in their free time. These items attempt to ascertain the pupils' like-dislike scores for self-initiated activities related to poetry, to answer the question of whether poetry is alive and well in the mind and heart of pupils when school is out, when poetry is not required.

Studying poetry and discussing poetry in one's free time seem to be fairly unpopular pastimes.

Reading poetry in pupils' free time showed no change in the post-program "like" score, and reading and writing in free time showed little change in scores.

All control group scores on all five items are lower than all other scores, underlining the less favorable orientation of the control group's scores in almost all items.

It will be interesting to weigh the changes in pre- and post program likes and dislikes, especially in relation to the pupils' rating of their poet-teacher, reported later under the rubric of "The Instruction."

III. Interests (Post-program students only.)

The items reported in this section were designed to assess the impact of the poet's program upon the pupils' estimates of their present and future interest in matters pertaining to poetry:

1. About 70% of the group taking the poetry program found it interesting.
2. Sixty-eight percent reported that given the opportunity, they would take more course work in poetry. (Because of a defect in the wording

of the item, the reference to course work *in poetry* was left out, but we have assumed that the reference to poetry was so clear that we may risk the guess that the pupils interpreted the item as intended.)

3. Fifty-two (54%) of the 97 pupils responding to an item on the effect of the experiences of the poetry program on their *interest in creative writing other than poetry* indicated an increase in such interest. Eighteen (19%) reported a decrease, and 27 (28%) scored no influence one way or the other. Such a response, even in view of the marked predisposition of the experimental group for the experimental program, seems to speak well for their experiences in it.

4. Fifty-one (55%) of 91 students responding to a question about the effects of the poetry program upon their *future self-initiated reading of poetry* reported a likely increase in such reading. Forty pupils (44%) reported the likelihood of a decrease.

5. A key question on whether the pupils in the program *wrote poetry on their own as a result of their work* elicited the information that 52 out of 100 pupils did so. The number seems to us to be larger than expectation, even in view of the pupils' favorable predisposition toward such activities. But such a view may be too optimistic, and the data here are much too inadequate to support a very defensible conclusion.

6. A large majority of pupils (76 of 98) in the program indicated that they had *learned a great deal or a moderate amount about writing poetry*, in contrast to 22 who considered they had not learned very much at all. Only the class characterized as of a "low academic ability" reversed this finding: 5 to 13.

It seems fair to conclude that about 75% of the pupils reporting on this item reported substantial *learning about the actual processes of writing poetry*, certainly no small accomplishment for the program.

7. Results very similar to those reported for the preceding item were reported about a question concerning *increases in the pupils' ability to understand poetry*.

8. An item asking whether pupils in the poetry program *improved their ability to express themselves orally* reverses the data of items 5, 6, and 7 above. Thirty-eight pupils said yes, 60 said no.

Perhaps one might note that here (as elsewhere, the pupils made fairly fine discriminations in their replies rather than responding in uniform and undiscriminating fashion either positively or negatively.

It appears very likely to us that gains in ability to express oneself orally might not be a salient outcome of a short program on poetry.

9. Replies to a question about pupils' *improvement in their ability to express themselves in written form* reveal that 63 felt they had indeed improved, in contrast to 33 who thought they had not. In this respect it appears that about two-thirds of the pupils who answered the post-program questionnaire thought they had improved themselves in a competence highly prized--at least in school.

10. The responses reported on this item may be both interesting and important for educators. The item asked the pupils to complete the following phrase: "In my opinion the rules for conduct--the social climate--in the poetry class..." In order to interpret the pupils' answers we must first note that in the judgment of almost all the adults and pupils involved in the program, the rules for conduct in the poet's classes could be characterized as open, free, much less formal and much less restricting than the rules of conduct customarily enforced in class. As a matter of fact, some adults and pupils felt that the "freedom" of the poet's classes approached anarchy.

Against this background we may note that 41 pupils found the rules for conduct in the poetry class congenial, while 19 viewed them with disfavor. We may also add that the class that consistently deprecated their experiences in the poetry class crossed the line here to register 8 favorable votes to 5 unfavorable. Both sides appear to feel very strongly about their views. The item tended to polarize the pupils' responses. Comments on both the "rules" of the school and the "rules" in the poet's classes ranged from golden positives to expressions like "stinks," "rots," and an occasional obscenity.

We were struck both by the sincerity and depth of many of the pupils' pleas for more freedom in school and by the passion in their dislike of a rigid system that they felt reduced them as human beings by enforcing puerile and unreasonable rules for conduct that demaned the school's verbal adherences to freedom. The dis-illusionment of many pupils with the quality of life in their schools was deeply felt and deeply expressed. So too were the minority's dislike for the excessive freedom they felt they were accorded in the poet's classes.

IV. The Instruction

An effort was made to determine how pupils in the poetry program viewed their poet-teacher. They were therefore asked at the end of the program to check a list of polar characteristics that might provide some clues about their perceptions of the poet as teacher. Their responses are presented below as the sum of all the pupils' replies at the Central site.

Characteristic	*No. of students checking item*	
Successful	61	
Unsuccessful		25
Friendly	98	
Unfriendly		2
Enthusiastic	77	

Characteristic	*No. of students checking item*	
Unenthusiastic		*17*
Patient	*59*	
Impatient		*27*
Well informed about poetry	*83*	
Poorly informed about poetry		*7*
Encourages us to write	*82*	
Discourages us from writing		*11*
Fair	*76*	
Unfair		*17*
Wants us to learn	*76*	
Doesn't care whether we learn		*18*
Dependable	*50*	
Undependable		*32*
Kind	*83*	
Unkind		*8*

We may note that the lowest positive rating was recorded for "dependable" (50), and the highest negative rating for "undependable" (32). The reference here may be to the poet's tardiness and/or absence during the program.

We have arbitrarily divided the positive scores into three groups: the four highest scores, the three middle scores, and the three lowest scores, as follows:

Highest		*Middle*		*Lowest*	
Friendly	*93*	*Enthusiastic*	*77*	*Successful*	*61*
Well informed about poetry	*83*	*Fair*	*76*	*Patient*	*59*
Kind	*83*	*Wants us to learn*	*76*	*Dependable*	*50*
Encourages us to write	*82*				

It seems that the pupils are trying to say that the poet may rate extremely high on seven characteristics and still not be viewed as an outstandingly successful teacher. It may also be noted that the negative scores are aligned inversely with the positive scores, the highest positives scores being coupled with the lowest negative scores and vice versa.

We can only guess that the pupils are extremely discriminating and in strong agreement in their judgments about the poet as teacher. They apparently do not equate successful teaching with friendliness, command of subject matter, kindness, and encouragement to write poetry. We shall not risk any further surmises about these matters, leaving them rather to those readers disposed to analysis.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PUPILS' RESPONSES AT THE CENTRAL SITE

1. Many of the pupils who expressed a dislike of poetry noted that they had experienced difficulties in understanding poetry--understanding it cognitively and denotatively. That is, they seemed to be looking for a message, a story, something that could be apprehended quickly and clearly, as they might apprehend a news article or a chapter in a science text. If this hunch comes close to reality, then it might follow (a) that some pupils should be inducted into the enjoyment of poetry by way of poetry that tells a simple story simply, and (b) that they should gradually be helped to comprehend the processes of connotation and affective response to language.

2. Reading poetry silently in class appears to polarize the pupils strongly: they either like it or dislike it (both heartily). Few respond in neutral terms. It might therefore be advisable for teachers to encourage silent reading principally for selected pupils who are likely to relish it. For the others, silent reading may simply harden a distaste for poetry.

3. It may be useful to restate one of the eternal verities about the diverse responses of different human beings to the same event. That is to say that the diversity of pupils' opinions about the same poet remain strikingly and refreshingly different. In a single class the pupils wrote the following replies to an open-ended question about the poet and poetry:

He was nice
It was fun
A good idea
Interesting
Different

Dislike him very much
A waste of time with him teaching it
I hate it
Wasn't very educational

4. Most pupils tried hard to respond carefully and in complex terms in the replies to items on the questionnaire. For example, some judged the poet to be both kind and unkind, difficult and easy to understand, as he might at different times have been.

THE STUDENT TEACHERS AT CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE

The Pre-Teaching Questionnaire The five student teachers scheduled to work in the poetry program at Central Connecticut State College completed a questionnaire designed to ascertain their views about the experimental teaching program lying ahead of them, and about their own interests in poetry. A summary of their responses may serve the purpose of establishing their attitudes, interests, and objectives prior to the experimental program, thus providing a baseline for the developments to follow in the program.

1. *Their objectives in the program*	*no. of Responses*
To learn how to stimulate pupils to write creatively	*4*
To learn how to help pupils enjoy poetry	*3*
To learn how to teach poetry	*3*
To find out how pupils feel about poetry	*1*
To stimulate pupils to think creatively	*1*

2. *Their own interest in poetry at this time*	*no. of Responses*
Interested, excited, enthusiastic	*5*
Now working with and writing poetry	*3*
Welcome anything different	*1*

3. *Interest in learning to teach poetry*	*no. of Responses*
Personal reactions	
Helping pupils	*4*
A challenge, great, looking forward to it	*3*
In working with pupils	
To find out how they react to poetry	*3*
To help them to write poetry	*1*
Outreaches of poetry	
Is a basis for creative writing	*1*
In conjunction with music	*1*

4. *Most important objectives in teaching poetry*	*no. of Responses*
To stimulate creativity, feeling response	*5*
To increase understanding	*3*
To increase enjoyment	*1*

To show relation of poetry to other kinds of writing	1
To overcome fear of "the blank page"	1

5. Collegiate preparation for teaching poetry	no. of Responses
Courses in methods of teaching	4
Courses in poetry	3
Literature for young adults	1
Philosophy of education	1

6. Anticipations for the experimental program	no. of Responses
Enthusiastic, interested hopeful	9
Relieved	1
Anxious	1

7. Student teachers' criteria for judging pupils' original poetry	no. of Responses
Will the pupil try?	3
Improvement in writing poetry	1
Quality of pupil's expression	1

8. Understanding of guidelines for working with poet	no. of Responses
To be cooperatively determined by student teacher, poet, and cooperating teacher	3
None provided	3
Do my best	1
Use poet's and cooperating teacher's help	1

9. Understanding of own responsibilities	no. of Responses
To help pupils	8
To help poet	1
To follow poet's guidelines	1

10. Expectations about pupils' responses to traditional teaching of poetry in school	no. of Responses
Dread, disgust, displeasure	6
Lack of understanding	1
Unresponsive	1

11. Expectations about pupil's responses to the experimental program

Favorable	*4*
Unfavorable	*1*
Do not know	*1*

Most student teachers appeared to be looking forward with pleasure to the experimental program, in spite of the fact that they anticipated that the pupils would have been "turned off" by traditional teaching. Possibly the most disturbing aspect of the student teachers' responses was their evident lack of knowledge about how the program was to be conducted. Perhaps the best presage of success for the program is their strong enthusiasm and optimistism concerning the success that awaits them in their student teaching in the experimental program.

STUDENT TEACHERS' RESPONSES AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM

The Methods Course at the College (Central)

The methods had originally been planned as a joint venture--a sort of team teaching essay by the college instructor and the poet. In actual operation, however, internal stresses quickly split the partnership. As a consequence, the instructor offered her customary course in methods of teaching English, solo. The poet arranged to make himself available, also solo, to small groups of student teachers.

It should be noted that the student teachers enrolled in the methods course included all those preparing to do student teaching in English. Of this group, only five were to be involved in the poetry program. One of these left the program and was replaced by a substitute. The report from this point forward will be concerned only with the five student teachers who ultimately participated in the poetry project.

The views of the five student teachers concerning their methods course with the college instructor are strongly negative--a phenomenon very often observed about many collegiate methods courses. One student teacher felt that she had learned a great deal from the course. The others saw the course as weakened by an overemphasis on construction of a long unit, lacking structure, and deficient in useful teaching techniques. The lack of careful planning for the student teaching experience was also noted--a theme that recurs over and over.

The Methods Course With the Poet

The major deficiencies of the methods course offered by the poet were again a lack of organization and careful planning, plus a lack of varied teaching techniques. Some found the course too short to be useful, others complained of the excessive emphasis on the poet's poetry, and still others regretted the lack of constructive criticism and feedback about their own teaching.

On the positive side of the ledger, however, the credits were impressive:

The work with the poet himself was the best part of the methods course.
Small-group work was excellent, useful, and enjoyable.
The poet was always available from 4 to 9.
I learned how to write poetry.
The poet's exercises were superb--the best part of the course, fantastic.
The most valuable course I've ever taken.
I wrote poetry on my own.
Such a course is a necessity
I want to teach poetry, etc.

Most college teachers would be pleased with such balance as the student teachers cast between weaknesses and strengths.

The Student Teaching Experiences

From the student teachers' point of view their student teaching experiences were in some respects very bad, and, in a few others, pretty good. On the debit side of the ledger was a unanimous opinion that the poet's irregular appearances in and absence from class were very bad. The student teachers were equally dissatisfied with the lack of organization, planning, and communication in the project. Three of five student teachers also noted some stress and strain because of what they saw as the cooperating teachers' disapproval of certain aspects of the poetry program.

Other dissatisfactions were noted, but the list is fairly long: "the poet taught us nothing"; he favored a few of the pupils; the program was viewed by three student teachers as a failure in their schools; and one student teacher was "caught in the middle" of differences between the poet and the cooperating teacher.

On the credit side of the ledger, three student teachers called attention first of all to the fact that the freedoms offered to pupils by the poet and his unconditional acceptance of each pupil, constituted major strengths of the teaching program and were a major contribution to the student teachers' own learnings in the project. Another strength of the program cited by the student teachers was that the poet's teaching had an impact on the pupils, it was "influential." Two student teachers volunteered that their cooperating teachers cooperated well and added strength to the instruction. Perhaps the finest accolade was offered by one student teacher who claimed to have learned to teach the poetry program "by myself." Another student teacher, however, found herself at the other pole, and stated her belief that the program was impossible without the poet.

The Student Teachers' View of Their Pupils

In response to a query about the junior and senior high school pupils' reactions to their experiences in the poetry program, the student teachers appeared to us to give carefully considered and perceptive answers. The pupils

were at first hesitant to write poetry, but warmed up rapidly
enjoyed the poetry
wrote well
missed the poet when he didn't come
were enthusiastic
accepted the poet immediately
lost some interest after three weeks
wrote some pretty bad poetry
saw no purpose in the program
didn't know what was going on

The Student Teachers' Views About the Program

The opinions of the student teachers about the organization, aims, planning, and administration of the program at the Central site were uniformly dismal:

unclarified
vague
confused
too brief
poorly planned
poorly communicated
disorganized

The College Contributions to the Student Teaching Experiences

The breakdown between the general methods course and the poet's methods course at the college--carried over into the student teaching experiences--generated an unrelieved bitterness among the student teachers. They felt that the contributions of the college were nil:

> The college did nothing.
> One college supervisor made one visit--or none.
> The regular methods course contributed nothing to our work in poetry in the schools.

Some student teachers noted bitterly that the college evaluation of their work in the schools was made on the basis of an inadequate number of observations. By far the saddest complaint of some student teachers related to the fact that the college evaluators ignored the extremely difficult circumstances of the experiment program, especially amid the conflicting expectations and the animosities generated among college supervisors, the poet, and some cooperating teachers. As a consequence, these student teachers felt, they received unmerited low grades for their student teaching --grades that might cause severe and permanent damage to their careers as teachers.

The Course in Methods of Teaching

What follows here represents the view of Prof. Shugert, the college supervisor and instructor who attempted to conduct the methods course in partnership with the poet. In her view the attempt was a complete fiasco in terms of both the course and its effects upon the future student teachers.

From the outset of the course, differences arose that immediately became irreconcilable. Neither the poet nor the instructor would or could teach what the other wanted to teach in the other's way. The two differed radically on how to conduct the course, and these differences were never resolved. For example, Prof. Shugert wanted to set a limit to the time allotted to readings of the student teachers' original poetry. The poet disagreed. The instructor wanted to work with the student teachers as a group; the poet felt he could work only with small groups. Each wanted to pursue his own objectives and methods, and the competition for class time could not be resolved. The instructor insisted that the student teachers attend the methods course; the poet refused to make attendance compulsory. The student teachers became accustomed to "blanket" reassurances from the poet, didn't get them from the instructor, and so on.

Perhaps happily, the two agreed to go their separate ways. As Prof Shugert said, she felt she had better teach the methods course, and did.

The Instructor's View of the Poet

In her analysis of the situation, the instructor noted that the poet expected everyone to adopt his values, interests, goals, and methods of teaching. Further, the poet would not work with all the student teachers and refused to work with one who seemed to him to demand too much structure in the planning and teaching. Nor did the instructor share the poet's view that poetry was the most important thing to teach.

Another difference arose between the two when the poet failed to adhere to agreements about the time he was to spend at the college and later at the schools serving as student teaching sites. As Prof. Shugert noted with some dismay, the poet even walked out of one school a week ahead of time and cancelled his last class in another.

In Prof. Shugert's view, possibly the most detrimental consequence of the poet's work was that he managed to attract the student teachers so strongly that they became alienated from their college instructors and supervisors. As she observed, the student teachers became so accustomed to unconditional praise that anyone who pointed out a defect was "a bad guy."

The Instructor and a Supervisor Review the Program

Given another opportunity, Prof. Shugert would probably not participate. It is her opinion that poetry is not important enough to warrant separate and special treatment. Nor is she at all sure that just getting pupils to write poetry is worth the price that the program extracts.

Another college supervisor, Roger Zieger, faulted the poet for refusing to work with large groups of student teachers. It was clear, says Mr. Zieger, that the poet did not fit into the "structure of the schools." He seemed to lack organization and the ability to plan with the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. As a result, some student teachers were simply "thrown" into the program and told to teach.

Mr. Zieger joins Prof. Shugert in finding fault with the poet's unconditional positive acceptance of the student teachers' poetry, which, they maintain deprived the student teachers of criticism they badly needed.

He further notes that the student teachers' close alliance with the poet occasionally alienated the cooperating teachers.

In sum, the college instructor-supervisor and the second supervisor saw little virtue in this year's program at the Central site.

THE POET'S VIEW OF THE PROGRAM AT THE CENTRAL SITE

Gerald Hausman, the poet in the program at Central, reports on the problems that led to the abandonment of the original plan for him and Prof. Shugert to offer the course in methods of teaching together. (It is his view that some of the problems he encountered were unfortunate holdovers from last year's program.)

As his work in the methods course with Prof. Shugert unfolded, the division of labor became a matter of concern to him: "She did most of the lecturing and I would interject occasionally." In consequence, the student teachers did not come to know the poet, nor did they know what he expected of them. Beyond this, the student teachers were not sure who would grade them in the ambiguous situation created by the presence of a co-teacher whose role was never clarified.

This lack of clarification was never remedied, and the situation of the co-instructors deteriorated rapidly, especially when the poet clearly disagreed with the professor's objectives and methods in the course. The poet expressed a desire to work with small groups of student teachers, a desire made even more poignant because he felt that he was not getting to know his student teachers nor they him. The splitting of the methods course into two was a natural consequence of such a state of affairs and occurred after about two weeks.

The poet made himself available from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon. He reports that he established good rapport with twenty student teachers and that about twelve attended his sessions regularly and "wrote great poems." Hausman stressed self-expression, openness, and freedom in his class, and found his teaching gratifying. He prepared and distributed to his student teachers a set of procedures entitled "Twenty Ideas for a Poetry Workshop," which he judged were very well received.

It is clear, however, that not all of the thorny problems that resulted in the division of instruction for the methods course were resolved. Prof. Shugert did not participate in the poet's course, but requested written reports of the specific outcomes that were being achieved in the poet's course. Since he viewed himself as dealing principally with the writing and reading of poetry, both powerful but non-specific activities, he found it useless and unpleasant to be asked to specify what was being concretely achieved in his classes.

No resolution of the tensions generated by the events that occurred in the methods course was ever achieved, and the entire matter continued and continues to rankle.

The Student Teaching Experience

When the scene shifted from the college to the schools in which the poet and the student teachers were to put into practice what had been taught in the methods course, the difficulties multiplied. And no wonder. In the schools the teaching was "for keeps," and it involved not only the poet, the college supervisors, the student teachers, and the high school pupils, but also the cooperating teachers, department heads, and school principals.

Once again the failure of organization and communication comes up into high relief. In some schools the teachers thought the poet was a special student taking a degree at Central. Teacher and principals often were ignorant of the fact that Hausman was a poet, that he was teaching because he liked it and wanted to make a living out of it.

To make matters worse, the poet felt that some of the student teachers and cooperating teachers feared to carry out his ideas because they might be viewed as too radical by the authorities. In addition, the college supervisors often would not participate in the instruction, but simply came to observe. The serious threat of a poor grade in student teaching emerged to haunt some of the student teachers who felt they might not be able to meet the diverse and conflicting expectations of the poet, the cooperating teacher, the pupils, and above all, the college supervisors. [And in the issue it turned out that some of their worst fears were realized.]

The poet spoke critically of the college supervisors to the student teachers. He also found the cooperating teachers almost uniformly negative. Perhaps one sad reason for the complexities that are barely intimated here becomes visible in the poet's own words: "I didn't want [the student teachers to teach the class]. I wanted a more direct relationship with those kids [the high school pupils]." He goes on to add: "I antagonized the school in my own way and they antagonized me." He couldn't stand the grading systems that were woven into the fabric of the school and the college. Nor could he tolerate the parade of college supervisors, photographers, public relations men, and others through his classrooms. He felt torn by conflicting, impossible demands: "I went crazy trying to fulfill everyone's expectations." "They wanted me to fulfill the tasks of twenty poets." So he decided that he was "going to teach a few kids to write. And I did!"

The poet, to add to his troubles, showed a short motion picture that was barred from exhibition in the school after a preview performance: "I came to the end of my rope when that film was censored." When he did encounter a teacher who really wanted him to come to his class to teach poetry, he said, "'The hell with everything,' and I sat down and read my poems [to those pupils] for two days...and that was the first time they really related to me."

The Communication Problem

The poet also felt keenly his isolation from and lack of communication with representatives of the Commission: "If I could have just called someone up and got into a good discussion about the program."

In conversations and interviews with the poet--as perhaps also in these pages-- one is able to note with great clarity the evolution of the poet's ultimate loneliness in his program. Almost everyone falls away or drops out: the Commission administrators, some of the cooperating teachers, and some of the high school pupils. Of those who remained, the high school pupils who "found themselves" in the poetry program rewarded the poet with poetry. Several of the student teachers, on the other hand, possibly because they identified too closely with the poet's views and his teaching techniques, paid a very high price for their adherence--a price that may continue to be extracted throughout their teaching career.

Note: A final section entitled "Analysis and Recommendations" follows the report on the Southern project.

RESPONSES FROM SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN SITE

I. In my opinion

1. most poets

Pretest responses	*Favorable*	*Unfavorable*
Total pretest group	*51 (79%)*	*14 (21%)*
Experimental group	*32 (73%)*	*12 (27%)*
Control group	*19 (90%)*	*2 (10%)*
Post-test responses	*27 (59%)*	*19 (41%)*

Seventy-nine percent (51) of the pupils in the total pretest group were initially favorably disposed toward most poets.

Examples of responses

Favorable: "are very intelligent and hide their feelings in life and bring them out in poems."
Unfavorable: "are stupid asses."

In the post-test group 59% of the classifiable responses were favorable. Exposure to the poet in person appears to have dimmed the pupils' bright views from 72% to 59% favorable.

It may be worth noting that poets as people may in general be viewed by pupils more favorably than poetry itself in general.

Note: The control group included only about 22 pupils. For almost every item on the questionnaire this small group voted much more favorably than the experimental group. They seemed solidly and possibly indiscriminatingly strongly predisposed toward the study of poetry. Because of the pattern of consistently high favorable scores and the fact that there were only 22 pupils in the group, their scores are omitted in the report that follows.

I. In my opinion
2. the poetry I've read in school

We should note here that the intent of this item is to help define the pupils' views about the poetry generally studied in school, not about the poetry read in the course of the program.

	Favorable	*Unfavorable*
Pretest responses	*27 (53%)*	*24 (47%)*
Post-test responses	*28 (62%)*	*17 (38%)*

The pretest scores show a fairly favorable response to the poetry the pupils have studied in school. Even so, the post-test responses indicate that the pupils' experiences in the poetry program may have improved their opinions somewhat about poetry in general.

I. In my opinion
3. working with a poet in writing poetry

This item seeks to identify the pupils' pre-program and post-program views about working with a poet.

	Favorable	*Unfavorable*
Pretest responses	*32 (73%)*	*12 (27%)*
Post-test responses	*38 (76%)*	*12 (24%)*

The idea of working with a poet seems to exert a very strong attraction for the pupils. The (too small) control group seems almost avid, and the strong preference expressed by the experimental group before the program may even have been slightly improved by the program experiences themselves.

One might venture to say that on the basis of only the responses to the first three questionnaire items, the poet and the poetry program at the Southern site should thrive.

I. In my opinion
4. poetry

The pupils' responses to the idea of poetry per se may clarify the effects of the poetry program as it developed at the schools in the Southern site.

	Favorable	*Unfavorable*
Pretest responses	*39 (83%)*	*8 (17%)*
Post-test responses	*35 (73%)*	*13 (27%)*

The experimental group may have suffered a bit of a reality shock in the program: their score dropped from 83% to 73%. Nevertheless, most secondary school teachers of poetry might be very happy indeed to receive a "favorable" rating from 73% of their pupils.

II. Like-Dislike

1. studying poetry in class

This item is designed to pick up differences between a generalized like-dislike of poetry in school and studying poetry in school.

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*40 (76%)*	*13 (24%)*
Post-test responses	*39 (72%)*	*15 (28%)*

In these classes the liking for studying poetry seems quite pronounced, though perhaps more moderate than their preferences for working with the poet and for poetry in general. The post-test responses for the experimental group seem down just a little after the reality of the program, but still quite high.

II. Like-Dislike

2. reading poetry silently in class

One test of a pupil's commitment to poetry might well be his response to the prospect of reading poetry silently in class-before and after the poetry program.

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*32 (67%)*	*16 (33%)*
Post-test responses	*43 (74%)*	*15 (26%)*

The experimental group seemed by the end of their program to have increased their liking for silent reading in class, from 67% to 74%.

II. Like-Dislike

3. reading poetry aloud in class

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*26 (53%)*	*23 (47%)*
Post-test responses	*28 (64%)*	*16 (36%)*

Reading poetry aloud in class clearly seems to be less well liked than many other activities connected with the study of poetry in school. It is worth noting that the score of the experimental group after the completion of their program rose to 64%, from a pre-program score of 53%. This may well represent a substantial increment to be credited perhaps to the program.

II. Like-Dislike

4. listening to poetry in class

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest response	*27 (67%)*	*13 (33%)*
Post-test responses	*31 (72%)*	*12 (28%)*

A small rise in liking for listening to poetry in class is registered at completion of the program, from 67% to 72%.

II. Like-Dislike

5. discussing poetry in class

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*22 (55%)*	*18 (45%)*
Post-test responses	*29 (66%)*	*15 (34%)*

The experiences of the poetry program still appear to be operating well: the score for "discussing poetry in class" improves by 11 percentage points--up from 55% to 66%.

II. Like-Dislike

6. writing poetry in class

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*21 (44%)*	*27 (56%)*
Post-test responses	*32 (70%)*	*14 (30%)*

Writing poetry in class was not very highly prized by the experimental group before the poetry program. Given the emphasis accorded in the program to original poetry, the increase in the "like" score from 44% to 70% speaks highly for the success of the poet and the student teachers and for the pupils' response to their experimental class.

II. Like-Dislike

7. studying poetry in my free time

How many pupils like to read poetry during their free time, on their own? Does it appear likely that a relatively short program involving a poet could make a difference in the numbers who do?

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*19 (49%)*	*20 (51%)*
Post-test responses	*22 (42%)*	*31 (58%)*

The answer among the experimental classes at the Southern site seems to be No. The "like" scores drop from 49% to 42%.

II. Like-Dislike

8. reading poetry in my free time

How did the experimental program influence the reading of poetry in their free time among the pupils in the group?

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*34 (78%)*	*16 (32%)*
Post-test responses	*28 (61%)*	*18 (39%)*

Fewer pupils in the experimental group appear to like reading in their free time after the program (61%) than before (78%).

II. Like-Dislike

9. writing poetry in my free time

Since a major activity of the poetry program has been the writing of original poetry by pupils, it may be interesting to find out whether their liking for this activity appears to have changed at the end of their work in the poetry program.

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*28 (72%)*	*11 (28%)*
Post-test responses	*28 (58%)*	*20 (42%)*

The experimental group exhibits a decrease in their liking for writing poetry on their own time (72% to 58%), although the percent of pupils expressing a liking for such an activity remains surprisingly high in a country and at a time when poetry might be expected to fare even worse than less "exotic" studies. How many pupils like to work at problems in mathematics on their own free time?

II. Like-Dislike

10. listening to poetry in my free time

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*22 (51%)*	*21 (49%)*
Post-test responses	*19 (49%)*	*20 (51%)*

Surprisingly enough, the decrease noted in the experimental group's responses to questions about their liking for self-initiated activities, after the poetry program, does not appear here. The percentage remains about the same for the pre-test and post-test scores.

II. Like-Dislike

11. Discussing poetry in my free time

	Like	*Dislike*
Pretest responses	*17 (43%)*	*23 (57%)*
Post-test responses	*20 (47%)*	*23 (53%)*

The control group evinces a very slight increase in their post-program "like" score for discussing poetry in their free time.

* * *

Some observations about the pupils' responses on the "Like-Dislike" segment of the questionnaire may be in order:

1. Prior to the inception of the experimental program, pupils slated to participate in it seemed to evince a very strong liking for activities related to poetry. This may account for some of the slight "dampening" effects that appear in a few items after the conclusion of the program.
2. The scores for pupils' self-initiated activities in their free time are lower than their scores for in-school activities.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

1. Interest in the program

The pupils' interests in the program appear to be strong. Forty-three pupils (79%) expressed interest, as compared with 10 (21%) who expressed disinterest. The expression of interest in the program may bespeak a genuine arousal of interest among the pupils who participated.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

2. Future course work in poetry

If given an opportunity in the future to take more course work in poetry, 42 pupils (81%) reported they would elect one or more courses, as compared with 10 (19%) who would take none. This represents a strikingly large percentage of pupils who would of their own free will take more course work in poetry.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

3. Interest in other types of creative writing

Twenty-four pupils (50%) report that as a consequence of their experiences in the poetry program their interest in other types of creative writing has increased; 17 (35%) reported a decrease, and 7 (15%) reported no change.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

4. Reading poetry in free time

Twenty-eight pupils (56%) report that as a result of their experiences in the poetry program they read poetry on their own occasionally, often, or very often. Twenty-two (44%) do so rarely or never.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

5. Writing poetry in free time

Twenty-three pupils (48%) write poetry on their own initiative occasionally, often, or very often. Twenty-five (52%) do so very rarely or never.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

6. Learnings about poetry

Thirty-eight pupils (73%) indicate that they learned much or very much about writing poetry. Fourteen (27%) feel they learned little or nothing about it.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

7. Improvement in understanding poetry

Forty-three pupils (78%) believe they have improved their ability to understand poetry, in contrast to 12 (22%) who report very little improvement.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

8. Improvement in oral self-expression

The pupils do not indiscriminatingly attribute all good things to the poetry program. For example, about half of them believe they have improved their ability to express themselves when they speak, while the other half report little or no improvement in this respect.

These results are valuable principally because they seem to give evidence that the pupils did not simply give a strong positive reply to every question about their poetry program, the possibility of a "halo effect" therefore does not appear to be great, even though so many post-program responses recorded in this section of the questionnaire by the pupils are--at the very least--surprisingly laudatory.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

9. Improvement in written self-expression

Thirty-two pupils (62%) report improvement in their ability to express themselves when they write. Twenty (38%) report little or no improvement.

III. Interests (after completion of the poetry program)

10. The social climate in the poetry class

In this item the pupils were asked to complete the following phrase: "In my opinion the rules for conduct--the social climate--in the poetry class..." The replies of the pupils in the Southern schools included the following descriptive phrases about the rules for conduct in the poetry class:

> was good because it was informal
> It wasn't like a class but more or less like a rap session.
> is pretty good because people can just say and feel as they do
> no harsh rules or formal conduct
> is boring and uncomfortable
> is not there

IV. The instruction

An effort was made to determine how the pupils in the poetry program at the schools in the Southern site viewed their poet-teacher. They were therefore asked at the end of the program to check a list of polar characteristics that might provide some clues about their perceptions of the poet as teacher. Their responses are presented below as the sum of all the pupils' replies at the Southern site.

Characteristic	*No. of pupils checking item*	
Successful	37	
Unsuccessful		12
Friendly	48	
Unfriendly		5
Enthusiastic	46	
Unenthusiastic		3
Patient	44	
Impatient		3
Well informed about poetry	48	
Poorly informed about poetry		4
Encourages us to write	42	
Discourages us from writing		3
Fair	56	
Unfair		1
Wants us to learn	41	
Doesn't care whether we learn		4
Dependable	39	
Undependable		0
Kind	44	
Unkind		2

We must first note again the pupils' efforts to discriminate in their judgments. The characteristics of the poet are rated extremely high, with positive scores ranging from a high of 56 for fairness to a low of 39 for dependability. But all of these scores are in fact high, especially in view of the fact that negative views were very low. On the other hand, the pupils recorded the lowest number of positive scores for "successful". That is, 37 pupils judged the poet successful, fewer votes than on any other positive characteristic. In addition, the 12 negative votes for "unsuccessful" was very substantially greater than all other negative votes, which were distributed as follows: one 0; one 2; three 3's; two 4's; one 5.

Our abiding impression concerning this set of data is that the poet was successful as teacher and very successful indeed as person.

THE STUDENT TEACHERS AT SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE COMMITMENT TO POETRY

Seventeen student teachers at Southern Connecticut State College were enrolled in the course in the teaching of poetry offered there early in 1973 by the guest poet. Among them were the student teachers scheduled to do their student teaching. All the student teachers filled out a pre- and post course questionnaire that may provide some indications of the success of the course as seen by them. "Before" and "After" results for selected items are shown below:

	Item	*Before*		*After*	
		No	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*
1.	*If I came across a poem in a magazine or newspaper I would read it.*	*1*	*16*	*0*	*16*
2.	*If a poet were giving a free reading of his works, I would go.*	*5*	*12*	*2*	*14*
3.	*If a teacher assigns poetry to be studied, I do the assignment.*	*0*	*17*	*0*	*16*
4.	*If an assignment allows free reading, I would choose poetry.*	*7*	*10*	*3*	*13*
5.	*I write poetry, on my own.*	*8*	*10*	*4*	*12*
6.	*I feel a poem can be of some interest or value to me.*	*0*	*17*	*3*	*13*
7.	*I would like to know more about poems.*	*0*	*17*	*1*	*14*

No sharp increase or decrease in commitment to poetry seems to have occurred, perhaps because most student teachers were pretty strongly committed to start. On the other hand, almost no erosion of their commitment is evident, and in a few instances the experiences in the course seemed to have a slight positive effect, as in the items numbered (2) attendance at a free reading by a poet; (4) selection of poetry for a free reading assignment; (5) writing poetry "on my own."

The Pre-teaching Questionnaire

Six student teachers scheduled to work at Southern Connecticut State College completed a questionnaire designed to ascertain their views about the experimental teaching program lying ahead of them, and about their own interests in poetry. Their responses may provide a baseline for the developments to follow in their student teaching.

1. Their objectives in the program

Some student teachers hoped to help their pupils to experience poetry vividly and vitally, to see it as a different way of using language, and to become interested in it, involved in it. Others gave first priority to having their pupils write poetry.

2. Their own interest in poetry at this time

The student teachers characterized their own interest in poetry at this time as "great," "much greater," and "immense." Others viewed poetry as a source of personal enjoyment and wanted to write.

3. Interest in learning to teach poetry

This item evoked the following responses: great; paramount--as a way of getting a job; to make poetry meaningful to their pupils; and to lead pupils to write poetry.

4. Reactions to the experimental program so far:

"Terrific" favorably disposed; "fantastic!" and"great, great!"

5. Collegiate preparation for teaching poetry

The responses noted two major sources of preparation for teaching poetry: collegiate courses in poetry and the teaching of English and the course with the poet.

6. Anticipations for the experimental program

Replies to this query included the following: terrific, OK, fantastic, great, and enthusiastic.

7. Student teachers' criteria for judging pupils' original poetry

The replies included criteria like simply writing poetry, imagination, sincerity, artistic use of language, the pupils' own feelings about their writing.

8. Understanding of guidelines for working with poet

The following represent the student teachers' understandings about how they were to work with the poet: to help him; he helps us; plan with poet and try own techniques; and "not sure."

9. Expectations about the pupils' responses to the traditional teaching of poetry in school

The student teachers anticipated that their pupils would have reacted to traditional teaching of poetry with boredom, as being "irrelevant," and as being principally concerned with questions about rhyme and meter.

10. Expectations about the pupils' responses to the experimental program

The student teachers predicted that their own pupils would be enthusiastic, immensely impressed with the poet, responsive to the novelty and freedom of the course, and interested.

In sum, the augury for the course, in the view of the student teachers, was very favorable. Their predictions may be compared with the student teachers' views at the conclusion of the program, set out in some of the items listed below.

STUDENT TEACHERS' RESPONSES AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM

The Methods Course at the College (Southern)

Five out of six of the student teachers volunteered that the exercises developed by the poet were "superb," "the best part of the course," "invaluable". Some relished their exposure to current poetry. The "simulated teaching exercises" were thought to be helpful. The course was also characterized as being "the most valuable English course I've ever taken" and "a necessity for teaching poetry."

On the negative side the dissatisfactions were related to errors of omission rather than commission: The course was too short, some important skills were omitted, lesson planning was not taught. Other weaknesses cited poor organization and some constraint felt by one student teacher about expressing himself in class.

On balance, the methods course seemed to be rated as very successful and highly stimulating.

The Student Teaching Experiences

The student teachers noted the following strengths of the poetry course:

1. The pupils were amazed, pleased, and looked forward to "poetry day."
2. They felt that they had written beautiful poems.
3. Three classes, all girls, were enthralled, enthusiastic. In one, the pupils hung on the poet's every work and the pupils' poetry was "magnificent."
4. The poet was supportive of and helpful to the pupils.
5. Three student teachers attested to their enjoyment of the class, and one took great satisfaction in a friendship that developed with the poet.

The weaknesses of the program in some instances were very marked. Two classes were reported as regretting that they had volunteered for the course.

In another class many pupils "cut" the elective poetry program to attend a class making a motion picture film.

Other weaknesses cited included a lack of structure in the class, poor continuity because the classes met with poet only once a week, and too little constructive feedback for the student teachers.

A Special Class and a Special Note

One of the classes involved in the poetry program was a class for perceptually handicapped pupils, which seemed to experience especially traumatic stresses in the course.

As reported by the student teacher, the first class went very well. After that, however, things went rapidly down hill. Organization and structure were lacking, and the level of demand upon the pupils was too low. As a result of these and other factors, the freedom of the class often turned into bedlam. On occasion half the class left the room when the poet appeared. The pupils disliked their work and they got "no direction from the poet." The student teacher concluded that for these pupils the poetry class was a waste of time. He also adds, somewhat marvelously, that he wants to teach poetry.

It is in this report and in some of the others from the student teachers at the Southern site that an important and simple fact becomes salient: the poetry program was a marvel for some pupils and a poor experience for others.

THE INSTRUCTOR'S OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Professor Betty Hahn, Chairman of the Department of English at Southern Connecticut State College, states her views of the poetry program succinctly, in terms of strengths and weaknesses:

Strong points in the program

1. The college student teachers' contact with a practicing writer provided an opportunity for writing, criticism and development of teaching skill. (That they developed an honest and sensitive response to anything is fantastic. They gained confidence and flexibility. In addition, many junior and senior high school pupils "found their own voice" in poetry.)
2. The fact that the poet was in residence, in contrast to a visiting poet, meant that student teachers had opportunities for conferences and informal contacts.

3. The provision for continuation of the poetry workshops in the high schools meant that student teachers had the opportunity to translate theory into practice.
4. The college community had the opportunity to hear four well-known poets read their works and to meet with them informally.
5. The high school pupils responded favorably to the program, as evidence in their writing.

Weak points in the program

1. Implementation of the program in high schools requires a great amount of time and supervision. Once-a-week visits require careful planning and implementation--elements not always appreciated by the poet.
2. The poet's course in methods of teaching emphasized only contemporary poetry. Student teachers are expected to handle poetry of many periods in the schools.
3. Cooperating teachers in the high schools were not always free to participate in the instruction.
4. Administrators in the high schools were not always clear about the purposes of the program.
5. The poetry program requires complete responsibility, tact and sensitivity on the part of all. These qualities were not always evident, especially in the poet as the program continued, creating strain in some schools and in the college.

THE POET'S VIEW OF THE PROGRAM AT THE SOUTHERN SITE

The Methods Course

Ross Talarico, the poet-in-residence at the Southern site, has set out six major objectives for the methods course he offered to the student teachers at Southern Connecticut State College. They constitute a useful introduction to this portion of the report:

Poet's objectives in the methods course

1. To get student teachers to know how to read a poem: for them to be able to know "why" they like or dislike a poem.
2. To teach student teachers how to conduct writing exercises (and to know how exercises tend to free the imagination and stimulate a new awareness of language).

3. To enable student teachers to talk about poems and poetry with general confidence rather than with terms that tend to avoid the more crucial elements of the initial understanding of poetry--emphasizing voice, imagery, and subconsciousness rather than idology, philosophy, or social concerns.
4. To inspire: to make the student teachers want to read poems, and to make them want to experience the writing of poems both themselves and with their pupils.
5. To take, in the teaching of high school pupils, the distorted sense of "seriousness" out of the idea of poetry; and at the same time to begin to make a distinction between word-games and poetry.
6. To encourage, in the silences of the classroom, the desire to sleep backwards, burn a book, fall in love a half-dozen times in a month, distrust the poet who preaches, and to love and hate the same poem or person that comes into a life just when the decision has been made to live without it or him.

Talarico feels that the methods course at the college was successful: "I feel good about the student teachers who were involved." He goes on to add that at least half the student teachers volunteered that his course was the best they had had at college.

One of the principal objectives sought by the poet was that his student teachers should recognize in their own teaching the value of "an open and free atmosphere." This theme was also stressed by Hausman, as well as by some poets in the 1972 program.

It is Talarico's judment that his student teachers enjoyed the writing exercises most and that they were stimulated to want to teach poetry in a more professional, literary fashion. He adds that the student teachers learned to view a poem through the writer's eyes. If this latter estimate is sound, the student teachers gained an undeniably important competence.

It may be important to note that Talarico made no mention of any problems of grading student teachers nor of a lack of cooperation from the college instructor-supervisor, nor of other difficulties a poet might have encountered in offering the methods course.

The Student Teaching Experience

Talarico, like some other poets who have worked in the public schools, found that the principals and teachers were misinformed about what his responsibilities and functions were to be. Most important, they did not know that in his own list of priorities the student teachers took precedence over the pupils. As he notes, such views were not likely to be popular among school administrators and cooperating teachers.

Nevertheless, the student teachers appear to have had, at least, a fairly satisfactory experience during their work in the schools.

The Problem of Communication

The poet found that the college supervisor, Prof. Betty Hahn, was helpful at every stage of the program. Communication lines with her were good. It is with the college administrators that Talarico finds most to criticize. He notes that no one ever clarified what his duties at the college were. No one from the college ever inquired about how his work was going. On the other hand, some college administrators noted with strong disfavor the fact that he had no telephone. The irony of such behavior from people who showed no interest in communicating with him did not escape the poet's eye.

On the other hand, the only time the college administrators initiated a contact with Talarico occurred in reference to what he bitterly termed "a twenty-six dollar foul-up" -- apparently some sort of confusion about expense money for a visiting poet.

The poet's abiding question about the college administrators, however, went deeper: He had serious questions about the genuiness of the administrators' commitment to the program. He sums up his views by observing that the student teachers and most of the high school pupils learned a great deal, but that the college administrators appear to have learned very little.

VIEWS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS AT THE SOUTHERN SITE

The principal at one high school was interested enough in the program to fill out a fairly lengthy questionnaire at the end of the poetry program. He notes the following:

1. The administrative arrangements made by the college were excellent, well executed.
2. At his school the administration of the program was carried out through total involvement of school and departmental administrators.
3. No significant impact of the program on the teaching of poetry in the school was observed.
4. The English Department did not appear to be impressed with the program.
5. The program should focus more on inservice than on preservice education of teachers.
6. He would not welcome the poetry program as a permanent part of the English curriculum because of the way the members of the English Department reacted.

7. He would welcome other arts programs, but with reservation.
8. He believes that a useful model for the utilization of artists in the school did emerge. He adds, however, that the nature of the program should be determined more by the school than by the college.

The principal concludes by calling attention to the fact that most of his views derive from comments made to him by members of the English Department.

A *second principal* judged that the initial contact and the written materials outlining the program prior to its initiation were excellent. The lack of follow-up, however, caused some confusion. He did not set up special administrative procedures for the program, nor did he have any direct contact with it.

He is of the opinion that the program will not have any great impact on the English curriculum at his school. Several members of his faculty requested permission to observe the poet in action and registered no strong reactions pro or con.

He states that a useful model for the utilization of artists in the school did emerge, and that he would welcome the appearance of dancers, novelists, painters, musicians in the arts program.

At another school the *Chairman of the English Department* considers that the entire "arts" idea is both valuable and excellent. The department was delighted at the prospect of having the poetry program in the school.

At the beginning, the program was well received. The students were eager and interested. A damper was put on this enthusiasm, however, when the poet left the program before its conclusion.

The Chairman recommends that the poet evaluate the pupils' work more critically and suggest revisions of it.

The following criticisms of the poetry program were excerpted from the journal of one *cooperating teacher*. She states that she was not informed in advance that the pupils would be taken outside the school on an assignment to write a poem about spring. She writes:

> *There was no reason why I could not be informed in advance.* [Her italics.] This was the culmination of the entire two weeks before this... I will never get involved in any program like it again. I am tired of being a third wheel to a program with missing spokes.... All members should have many more meetings and be willing to bend a bit more than they are.
>
> I did not realize my role was to take care of discipline problems the poet can't handle.

Another cooperating teacher recalled that the pupils at first were very excited about the program. They read some of the poet's work before his arrival. When he appeared, he was "a dynamo," an exciting personality. The pupils were "eating out of his hand" and writing poetry on their own.

Later on, the enthusiasm abated because the poet paid no attention to some pupils who wanted criticism and help. Nevertheless, her account concludes with the recommendation that the program should not be given up.

Four cooperating teachers filled out a questionnaire about the program. Some of their responses are summarized below:

1. Their most important learnings were:
    - To motivate pupils.
    - To "loosen the structure" of the class.
    - That having pupils write poetry is a most excellent way to teach poetry.
    - That pupils learned the discipline of words.
2. Their principal responsibilities in the program should be:
    - To know the pupils.
    - To cooperate with the poet.
    - To take an active role in class.
    - To individualize the instruction.
    - To help the student teacher carry on the work when the poet is not present.
3. Their major satisfactions in the program were:
    - Seeing the pupils catch fire.
    - Seeing the pupils' satisfactions with success.
    - Seeing "non-creative" pupils doing some great work.
4. Their major dissatisfactions in the program were:
    - Lack of direction and organization.
    - Lack of follow-up on the program.
    - Lack of encouragement to pupils to improve the structure of their poems.
    - The fact that the poet often put some pupils in an awkward position.
    - No discussion of poet's rationale, methods, materials was ever heard.
5. The student teachers seemed to them:
    - To be capable, interested, cooperative.
    - To be hurt by the program.
    - To work well with the poet.
6. The administration of the program:
    - Should bring all people involved in the program together prior to its start.
    - Should reorganize the program as a voluntary activity.
    - Was a bit sketchy.

    Showed a lack of communication, of role definition, and of clear definition of the objectives.

7. The behavior of the pupils in class:
    - Was always good.
    - Was excellent, lively, intelligent.
    - Was unresponsive to the concept of freedom without responsibility.
8. The pupils' own writing was:
    - Ten percent superior, publishable; 50% passable; 40% awkward and shallow.
    - Devoid of significance; accepted without discrimination.
    - From fair to excellent; good to excellent prevailed.
    - Not exceptional for them.
9. The work of the poet in the program was:
    - Excellent at the beginning.
    - Unsatisfactory.
    - Not impressive.
    - Exciting at times.
    - Disappointing when he left.

VIEWS OF COOPERATING TEACHERS AT THE SOUTHERN SITE

One cooperating teacher felt that her own role in the poetry program was never thoroughly explained to her. Nevertheless, the work of the poet himself apparently was successful. She testified to the fact that the pupils responded very well indeed to the poet and to his teaching. She made special mention of two factors important in his success: his ability to be one with the pupils and his relaxed, low-pressure approach to the teaching of poetry.

A second teacher noted her own early enthusiasm for the program and adds that "the student teacher faded rapidly." As reasons for this downhill slide, she mentions the administration's failure to clarify her role and that of the poet, the lack of detailed planning, and the manner in which the poet treated the student teacher. She remarked that the poet on occasion embarrassed the student teacher in her work with the class. Early in the program there appeared to be a genuine conflict as to whether the student teacher or the poet was in charge, but this situation improved as the program developed.

The cooperating teacher herself always felt, however, that she was the outsider.

A third cooperating teacher seemed to have had a much better experience. He took an active part in the work and got along well with both the poet and the student teacher. He affirmed that he was pleased with the program, that some pupils who had been formerly relatively disengaged in class responded well to the new experience, and that he himself profited a great deal from it.

The three cooperating teachers mentioned above also responded to a questionnaire on their experiences in the program. Some of their observations are paraphrased below:

1. Their most important learnings
   The game-like activities in the program.
   Certain techniques to stimulate creativity.
2. Their principal responsibilities
   To encourage pupils to respond to the plans made by the poet and the student teacher.
   To create a receptive atmosphere.
   To explain the nature of the program to the pupils.
   To provide feedback to the poet and the student teacher.
3. Their major satisfactions
   None.
   Learning "gimmicks" to encourage the writing of poetry and hearing the poet describe his approach.
   Seeing pupils, some previously unresponsive, responding to poetry.
4. Their major dissatisfactions
   Frustration at the way the poet dealt with her and the pupils.
   The "choppiness" of only one day of poetry a week.
5. Reactions of the student teachers
   Enthusiastic "until [the poet] stepped into the classroom, usurped power, and sometimes bored the pupils."
   They enjoyed it.
   They became sensitive to language and imagery. The student teacher became the "expert" in my class.
6. The pupils' writings
   Were surprisingly good. Refreshing.
   Improved steadily.
   Demonstrated a high degree of sensitivity.
7. The interpersonal climate of the classroom
   Was awful most of the time. Was good only when the poet responded honestly to the pupils' poetry.
   Was relaxed, spontaneous.
   Was warm, open, accepting.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR "POETS IN THE COLLEGES"

1. The poet as "paraprofessional"

The concept that the poet would teach the student teachers at the college how to teach poetry and then assist them as paraprofessional aides in the schoolroom collapsed because of its inner contradictions: the poet had a unique and powerful contribution to make in both college and schoolroom and he could make it only as teacher, so he taught, fortunately.

2. The experimental teaching of poetry

Since the poetry program is avowedly in its first experimental stage, the student teacher's entire program in the school should not be devoted to poetry. The task is too complex and the criteria too ambiguous to force or ask the student teacher to risk his student teaching grade (and learnings) on one throw. With an admixture of more familiar topics to teach, the student teacher's grade could be based more equitably on his performance in an array of diverse tasks rather than on his work in poetry alone. If indeed there are good reasons to focus the student teaching solely on poetry, then it follows that the supervision and grading should be done by experts in the problems of teaching creative poetry.

3. Of time and the teaching of poetry

The teaching of poetry and of how to teach poetry takes time. It therefore follows that a substantial amount of time should be allocated to the poet for instruction in the college methods and in the schools. The program appeared to us to be on occasion more a product of happenstance and accident than a planned cumulation of inputs.

4. The writing of poetry

One recommendation appears regularly in the data of our study, in a theme sounded by college supervisors, cooperating teachers, and some student teachers. They recommend that the poet criticize the original poetry he receives, suggest revisions, etc. This recommendation seems to us to ignore a phenomenon that emerges saliently in the data: The readiness to write poetry in class is so often dependent upon the pupil's conviction that he may expect a pure and uncritical acceptance of his deeply felt personal revelation, that premature criticism may cut the response off at birth. The poets in the program seem to have understood this completely. As a result, they were ready with the proper response to their pupils' first writings: an unconditional positive acceptance of whatever they wrote. The poets recognized that didactic, analytic, and critical responses offered prematurely are too often death to young people's poetry.

5. The slow-down in the poetry program

A substantial number of participants and observers noted that after perhaps three weeks or so the instruction in the poetry program began to slow down, cool off, limp a little. It is our guess that this phenomenon may have resulted from lack of developmental planning by the poets and student teachers. Too often there seemed no place to go after the first excited response to the poet's presence and to the fact that the pupils could write real live poetry.

It seems to us advisable to ask the poets and English teachers to plan for developmental sequences beyond what was visible in the 1973 program. The experience of poetry should be viewed as an integral part of the English curriculum in all grades. In each grade the pupils and teachers should build the poets' visits into their annual plans, so that the arrival of the poet becomes an integral part of longer sequences that start beforehand and continue after his departure, and continue also from year to year.

6. Poets as people who are "different"

Poets-as-teachers are often significantly different from teachers in schools and colleges. The nature of these differences should therefore be explored with, and explained to, all the individuals who will interact with the poet. Some of the differences that became evident in our data include the following:

a. Poets sometimes permit greater relaxation of rules of conduct than most teachers. For example, Kenneth Koch has written that he lets "the children make a good deal of noise."
b. Poets sometimes use a vocabulary unusual for the classroom.
c. Poets sometimes are more open about love, sex, morality, aggression, sorrow, and joy than are most teachers.
d. Poets sometimes treat institutional schedules, procedures, mores, and manners much more cavalierly than do teachers.

And this list could be extended. What needs to be said, however, is that everyone who interacts with the poet or who works in the same institution should be informed about the likelihood of some of these departures from institutional manners, customs, and behavior. That is, a great deal of attention should be given to a clear delineation of expectations about the poet and the poetry program. The roles of everyone in the program or touching upon it should be discussed. In addition, the poet's role and the limits of his institutional behavior should be clarified with him, and agreements should be clearly specified before he is offered a contract.

We can only hope that the precautions suggested here are not put into practice so narrowly and stringently that the poets and their poetry will be stifled in precisely those places where they should enjoy their greatest freedoms.

7. The clarification and rationalization of objectives

The objectives of the poetry program exhibit certain internal inconsistencies --as noted for example in the specification of the poet's role as "paraprofessional" when his major function is as co-teacher or even as principal teacher. The program could therefore probably profit now from a penetrating critical reexamination and reformulation. Such a reformulation would constitute a useful frame of reference for the specification of roles, functions, and communications needed for the improvement of the program. If left in its present condition, the program is likely to wear out its welcome and waste its substance by moving from one site to another without making a lasting impact. The evidence to support this statement seems to us to be clearly visible in our data.

8. The need for communication

If the poetry program is reformulated and improved, if it overcomes its weaknesses and maximizes its strengths, it will still fail to achieve its full impact unless the communication necessary to create a favorable situation for it is also improved. If the poet's work is to be given a fair chance for success, the objectives of the program and the special circumstances surrounding it must be communicated clearly and persuasively to those individuals who are involved in it or who may have power over it: parents, pupils, administrators, teachers (all teachers, not just the cooperating teachers), poets, Commission and staff, college personnel, and the public and news media.

The tasks suggested here pose problems that are difficult and delicate. But if the reconceptualized program is not honestly and persuasively communicated, then misunderstandings and minor but unavoidable mishaps and embarrassments will certainly arise to destroy it or starve it to death. Does not the evidence presented in this report indicate that such outcomes are likely? Can we in good conscience allow student teachers, pupils, school and college faculties to pay again the price that some paid this year? And can we in good conscience fail to protect and enhance the substantial and often marvelous outcomes of this year's program?

9. The student teachers in the shredder

The student teachers are relatively powerless in the midst of the forces that surround them. Can they and should they be called upon to meet the often conflicting demands of the poet, college instructors, college supervisors, and the cooperating teachers? if the answer is No, as it must be, then the processes by which the student teachers are selected, instructed, fulfill their student teaching responsibilities, and receive their grades must be entirely reconstructed. They are paying the steepest price for the program, and they have the least power in it. It therefore follows that in justice, their interests must be most zealously protected.

The policies and procedures by which this could be accomplished are not too difficult to develop. For example, the college student teachers should elect to join the program after it has been fully described to them. They should also have the option of withdrawing from the program after its first week, without penalty. The grades for student teaching might perhaps be awarded on the basis of their performance in both the poetry class and other less demanding and less difficult topics. The criteria for grading should be clearly set out. Other procedures might be established for the participation of student teachers, cooperating teachers, supervisors, and visiting expert observers in the award of grades. Other and better procedures would undoubtedly emerge if a participatory group were formed to develop grading policies for the special circumstances of the poetry program.

10. The high school pupils in the program

Some high school pupils responded very well to their experiences in the poetry program. Others were turned off, revolted, cut classes, etc. Such behavior, we would guess, is as much a product of the pupils' previous experiences with poetry as of the program itself. Nevertheless, since the program at present cannot be offered to all pupils, might it not be advisable to offer it for a time only to those who volunteer for it? Such a procedure would improve the probability of success--of course--but it also might accomplish a more important objective. A successful program would become known in the school as such. The chances then might be improved that more pupils would elect it and that, at some later time, it might be made even more widely available--and with better chances of success.

11. The poet as problem

The poet must recognize that he is not working alone in the program. He is working in two institutions whose functions are broader than his own in the education of teachers. He should not, of course, become a bureaucrat in a bureaucracy, but he must recognize his responsibilities to support the school and college--within the reasonable limits of a free and flexible reconstituted program. He cannot and should not accept an appointment and then undercut it--the gods forfend--in rhythmic language.

The poet must sustain the program as it must sustain him.

In addition, if the poet is of the opinion that he can do his best work only when his classes are small, then arrangements should be made to organize small classes or the poet should not be engaged.

A FINAL WORD

The principal objective of the poetry program is to prepare teachers who will do a better job of teaching, who will rise above the generally pedestrian level of instruction and make the experience of poetry a moving and significant part of their pupils' lives. The process of preparing the teachers who will do this is presently conceptualized in the following fashion: (1) a successful poet will come to a college where he will teach a course in the methods of teaching poetry; (2) upon completion of this course he will accompany his student teachers into the schools where he will help them to teach what may be called "the appreciation and writing of poetry"; (3) at the conclusion of these experiences the student teachers will have gained enough elementary competences to teach poetry better when they face their own classes as responsible, certified teachers.

The data that we have examined in the course of our study lead us to question these assumptions. One message that comes through loud and clear is that the poets do teach the high school pupils. One of the poets says in unequivocal terms that it is the pupils to whom he is drawn, the pupils who are most responsive. The second observation we derive from our data is that it is the poet who energizes the pupils. They see him as a strange, exciting human being who charges them up, who polarizes them. Some pupils resonate fully to the poet--more fully perhaps than to any other school experience. Others are repelled by him--driven even further away from the experience of poetry than they were before meeting him. Only a few remain untouched or uncaring. But whatever the pupils' mixed reactions to the poet, many of them (and many of the student teachers) write poetry, poetry that is as we might expect, often cliché and trivial, but poetry that is also occasionally illuminated, inspired and beautiful. Furthermore, a significant number of pupils begin to read poetry and respond to it in heightened fashion. All of these outcomes are very rarely observed in the traditional teaching of poetry. Furthermore, it is our guess that even the most apt of the student teachers in the program--with the exception of those who may be poets-- will not achieve the kinds of response from the pupils that the poets do.

Our hunch is, therefore, that poetry usually cannot be taught in a way that causes pupils to respond deeply to poetry and to write poetry unless a poet teaches them to do so. Most English teachers are not poets and they do not (and, we believe, cannot) often evoke a creative response to poetry nor stimulate their pupils to write. It seems to us, therefore, useful to conceptualize the teaching of poetry as a function of both teacher and poet, perhaps as follows:

> For objectives of Knowledge: the teacher alone
>
> For emotional response to poetry; the teacher, with occasional contributions of the poet.
>
> For the writing of original poetry: the poet, with the teacher as an aide if he needs this collaboration.

With such an analysis it becomes relatively simple to structure the complementary roles of student teachers and cooperating teachers.

To recapitulate, it does not seem to us that the teacher can be taught to do what the poet does, unless the teacher is also a poet. To this conclusion we add an observation derived from the data of this study: The contribution of the poet as person and the poet as teacher- in the college methods course and in the schoolroom--is an irreplaceable component that energizes both knowledge about poetry and a fuller emotional response to poetry.

It seems to us, therefore, useful to repeat that the poet should be built into the curriculum of poetry as occasional teacher from kindergarten through high school and college. The strategy for teaching poetry then demands (1) a continuing curriculum in poetry, and (2) the planned participation of poets in both the education of pupils and the education of future teachers of English.

In brief, if poetry is necessary in the schools, then so too is the poet. Perhaps we can make the program a success if we follow John Berryman's invitation to Saul Bellow: "Let's join forces, large and small..." And let's do it for the sake of pupils like the seventh grader who wrote at the end of his questionnaire: "I think this was a good program and I think you should continue it because I never read or write poetry until the program."